



The R.^d Reverend *Father in GOD*
FRANCIS Lord Bishop of *ROCHESTER*
and *DEAN* of *WESTMINSTER*.

Printed for Christian Bowyer at the Rose in Paternoster Row.



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SERMONS
AND
DISCOURSES
ON SEVERAL
SUBJECTS
AND
OCCASIONS.

BY
FRANCIS ATTERBURY, D.D.
late Lord Bishop of ROCHESTER,
and Dean of WESTMINSTER.

In Two VOLUMES,

VOL. I.

The THIRD EDITION.

LONDON;

Printed by *J. Bettenham*, for CHRISTIAN
BOWYER at the *Rose* in *Pater-noster-Row*.
M,DCC,XXX.



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AND
DISCOURSES
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FRANCIS & BURTON
The Lord Bishop of Exeter
and Dean of Westminster.



In Two Volumes

Vol. I

The Third Edition

LONDON

Printed by G. Dutton, for CHRISTIAN
BOWER at the Rose in Pall-mall.
M.DCC.XXX.



TO THE
Right Reverend Father in God
JONATHAN,

By Divine Permission,
Lord Bishop of *Winchester*,
AND
Prelate of the Most Noble
Order of the Garter.

May it please Your Lordship,

TO accept this Publick
Testimony of Gra-
titude from a Man
who stands indebted to Your
LORDSHIP for many Fa-
vours; great in themselves,

The Dedication.

but made much greater by
Your free and generous
Manner of conferring them.
For they were not the Ef-
fects of Importunity, or the
just Rewards of Domestick
Service; they sprang not
from Dependence, or Ac-
quaintance; being bestow'd
on One, who was (at the
first) little known to your
Lordship, otherwise than by
his honest Endeavours to re-
trieve those *Synodical Rights*
of the Clergy, whereof You,
my LORD, have been all
along, to your great Ho-
nour, the avow'd Patron and
Defender.

I men-

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I mention not this Instance of Your LORDSHIP's Goodness to Me, with any View of distinguishing myself from Others: For You have done nothing in My Case, but what You have frequently practis'd, since the time that Divine Providence, for the Good of this Church, rais'd You to the Episcopal Dignity; Nothing, but what hath been successively acknowledged by all Those who have prefix'd your Right Reverend Name to their Labours, from the Learned and Venerable Dr. Pocock, down to the mean Author of

The Dedication.

the following Sermons. And, while YOUR LORDSHIP continues to repeat the same Acts of Generosity, You must be contented to receive the very same Acknowledgments; since We, who share the Obligations, can scarce find a better way of expressing our Thanks, and doing Justice to Your Character, than by informing the World, Why, and How they were deriv'd to us.

The Secrecy, with which Wise Statesmen conduct their Designs for the Publick Good, so, as that the Execu-

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Execution alone shall make the Discovery, hath by Your LORDSHIP been as carefully observ'd in Your Private Schemes of Beneficence; which have seldom appear'd till they took Effect, and surpriz'd even Those, who were most nearly interested in the Success of them. By this means, You have, after the best manner, forbidden all Applications, by rendring them, not only unnecessary, but impracticable; and have enjoy'd to the utmost, both the Honour, and the Pleasure of well doing.

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Indeed, there is scarce any Virtue which either disposes the Mind to deserve well of Others, or adds Comeliness and Grace to deserving Actions, that doth not manifestly appear, and shine in Your LORDSHIP: And by these Recommending Circumstances You engage the very Hearts of those You Oblige, and double the Value of every Kindness You do them.

To give, *hoping* (and looking) *for nothing again*, is the Gospel-Rule of Beneficence; and Your LORDSHIP hath
strictly

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strictly observ'd it. For none of your Gifts have been clogg'd with Conditions; You have expected no Returns, but what every one who hath a thankful Mind, and a just Sense of his Duty, would even choose and delight to pay: You have aim'd only at doing as became You in Your high Station; and when Those whom You advanced, did likewise as became them in *Their* Stations, your Desires were answered, and You had your Reward.

It

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It is well known with what Courtesy and Ease You have always treated Those whom You have once oblig'd; on that very account they were sure of having a nearer and freer Access to Your LORDSHIP, instead of being kept to the Usual Terms of Distance and Dependence. You have been so far from ever putting any Man in mind of what You have done for him, that You would never bear to be put in mind of it Your self; and have not been more careful to prevent Solicitations, than to avoid Acknowledgments.

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ments. You had the Thanks
of Your Own Conscience,
and You neither needed nor
desir'd any Other.

It is the peculiar Happi-
ness of those Persons, on
whom Your Favours are
plac'd, that they receive
them from an Hand, emi-
nent for its great and lasting
Services to our Church and
Constitution. For there are,
I think, no Enemies what-
soever, either of her Doc-
trine, Discipline, or Wor-
ship, (either within Doors,
or without) but what Your
LORDSHIP hath, in the Course
of

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of your Episcopal Government, withstood, and baffled.

You were one of those *Seven Prelates* (worthy of honourable Remembrance) who gave the most effectual Check to the Attempts of *Popery* in a late Reign, and preserv'd the pure Profession of Christianity among us by the same Suffering Methods by which it was at first propagated. It can never be forgotten, with what a true Christian Spirit (such as animated the chief Pastors of the Church, in those Days, when Episcopacy

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pacy was a certain Step to Martyrdom) You stood forth, and offer'd your self willingly to *witness a good Confession* ; how Solicitous You were, lest the *Tower-Gates* should have been shut upon those Excellent Persons, e'er Your Distance would permit You to accompany them in their glorious Confinement ; to partake of which, You made as much Haste, as some Men afterwards did, to draw the Advantages of it to themselves, under a new Turn of Affairs.

When

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When That happen'd,
New Occasions also of serving the Church, offer'd themselves to Your Lordship, which You as readily embrac'd. The Fatherly Vigilance, and Exemplary Firmness you then shew'd in frustrating the Methods made Use of to perpetuate *Schism*, by unauthoriz'd *Schools* and *Seminaries*, were observ'd with Pleasure, and own'd with Thanks, by All that wish'd well to our Establishment. Nor could they, who wish'd ill to it, justly blame an Endeavour of securing to the *Ordinary* that
Power,

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Power, which he always enjoy'd, and of which he is not yet divested; and of confining a Legal Indulgence within the Bounds prescrib'd by that Law which gave Birth to it.

Shall I take notice here, of the Seasonable and Liberal Encouragements You reach'd out to a Worthy *Presbyter* of this Church, who repress'd the bold Attempts of *Sectaries* by his Learned and Accurate Writings? It may, I think, become me to mention even this particular Act of Your Bounty, since it
had

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had a General Aim, and Influence, and was not terminated in the *Person*, how deserving soever, but in the *Righteous Cause* which he espous'd; and which, as Your LORDSHIP's fix'd Judgment leads You, by all Lawful Means to support, so your Temper inclines You rather to promote by Rewards, than Punishments.

The Fears of Popery were scarce remov'd, when *Heresy* began to diffuse its Venom; and the sacred Mysteries of our Faith were, after a daring and petulant manner,

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manner, expos'd to publick Scorn, even in one of those famous *Seats of Knowledge*, which then were, and still are, the chief Bulwarks of true Religion. It pleas'd God, that You were now possess'd of a *See*, which gave You Power to Visit and Correct such Enormities; and You exerted that Power with Zeal and Vigour; driving out from the Schools of Learning a Disciple of *Arius*, who had all the Craft and Obstinacy of his Master, and the good Luck, for some time, to be as well Supported. The Prosecution of this

a

Cause

The Dedication.

Cause was attended with so many Difficulties, as would have shaken a Resolution less firm than your LORDSHIP'S. But the Discharge of your great Trust, and the Maintenance of God's Truth, were the Springs which had set You on work; and They who act upon such Principles, can never be discourag'd.

The Issue of that memorable Struggle, as it was of great Advantage to the Church, and the Universities, in Other Respects, so particularly in This, that it
fix'd

The Dedication.

fix'd the Power of *Visitors*
(not till then acknowledg'd
Final) upon the sure Foun-
dation of a *Judgment* in *Par-*
liament; and, by that means,
made so effectual a Provi-
sion for the future Quiet of
those Learned Bodies, as may
be reckon'd equal to the
greatest Benefactions.

This, and another Parli-
amentary Decision, which
your LORDSHIP, not long
after, with equal Difficul-
ty, obtain'd; and by which
the *Bishop's* sole Right to
judge of the *Qualifications*
of *Persons* applying for In-
stitu-

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stitution, was unalterably confirm'd ; are such Instances of your Magnanimity, and Publick Spirit, as will remain in Memory, while the Church or the Law of *England* lasts. For they were not Temporary Services, to be made use of, and talk'd of for a while, and then forgotten ; but (as the Historian truly said of his own Writings) *Perpetual Acquisitions*, laid up for the Benefit of succeeding Ages. And He who contends for Common Rights, with Lower Aims than these, means not the Constitution, but Himself ;

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self; and deserves not the Applause even of his Own Times, when he is not disinterested enough to look beyond them.

It was the Sense of these Important Services, already done by your LORDSHIP, that occasion'd a general Joy among good Men, when they heard of your intended Translation to the See of *Winchester*. Particularly, the Clergy of that Diocese, and the University of *Oxford*, who were chiefly concern'd in the Consequences of your Promotion, receiv'd

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the first Accounts of it with the greatest Satisfaction, and were in Pain, while the Event was suspended----- A Suspence, which we may presume design'd to do Honour to your LORDSHIP, and to justify the Wisdom of Her Majesty's Choice ; since it tended to shew how impatiently You were expected, and desir'd, by Those who were to be under your Inspection and Authority.

Among all the Learned Bodies, whose Hopes and Fears were then in greatest Agitation, None was more

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(or with more Reason) solicitous than that *House*, which had the Honour of Educating your LORDSHIP, and instilling into your Mind those Principles, which whoever hath once imbib'd, seldom forsakes; and whosoever forsakes not, must immoveably adhere to the true Interests of the Church, and Monarchy. Whilst that fruitful Parent thus trains up her Children, She is secure of Protection and Favour from your LORDSHIP, or from Whoever else. He be, that hath not been withheld from doing Good to her, in

The Dedication.

Evil Days, by malicious and groundless Clamours. Under Your and Their Shadow She hath *rested at Noon*, when the Heat was most intense and scorching: She hath flourish'd hitherto, and will, I doubt not, still continue to flourish, tho' Her Enemies be Many and Mighty, and daily *shoot out their Arrows against her, even bitter Words*. She looks upon your LORDSHIP's Advancement, as a sure Token, that Divine Providence is still propitious to Her; and, encourag'd by this Prospect, She is ready to take up her Parable,
and

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and say: Joseph is a fruitful Bough, even a fruitful Bough by a Well, whose Branches run over the Wall. The Archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his Bow abode in Strength, and the Arms of his Hands were made strong by the Hands of the Mighty God of Jacob: from thence is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel.

In the Names of These, and of all Other the true Friends and Sons of the Church, permit me, My LORD, to congratulate your Accession to a See, which
will

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will afford You such a Sphere of Action as You were made to fill ; which will furnish You with many welcome Opportunities of doing Good, of rewarding Merit, of cherishing Piety and Virtue, of encouraging Persons, distinguish'd by their Learning, their undaunted Assertion of Divine Truths, and undissembled Zeal for our admirable Constitution in Church and State ; which will, in short, enable You to carry on all those Excellent Designs, to which your Upright and Bountiful Heart is religiously inclin'd.

What

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What may We not promise our selves from the Influence of your LORDSHIP's Conduct in so Eminent a Station? from your known Courage and Fervency in the Cause of God, and his Church? from the Greatness of your Mind, the Goodness of your Intentions, and the Soundness of your Principles? from that Habitual Love of *Worthy Deeds*, which You contracted so early, and have by long Practice confirm'd? and from your Experience of the Success that hath attended You in all You have suffer'd, or done for the Publick?

By

The Dedication.

By YOUR LORDSHIP'S
Means, and within the Circle
of your Power, we doubt
not but to see all proper
Steps taken towards reviving
decay'd Discipline; and re-
storing Church-Censures to
their due Force and Credit;
towards detecting and defeat-
ing Clandestine Simoniackal
Contracts; towards securing
the Rights and Revenues of
the Clergy from Encroach-
ments, rescuing their Persons
and sacred Function from
Contempt, and freeing Re-
ligion it self from the Insults
now made upon it by Blas-
phemous Tongues, and Pens,
with

The Dedication.

with equal Boldness and Impunity.

These, MY LORD, are the Expectations with which the best Men are now entertaining themselves, and which You are hastning to make good. The Actions of the past Years of your Life are a sure Earnest and Pledge of what those to come will produce; and the bright Example You have set long ago to Your Self, and to Others, shall grow brighter in Proportion to your Power and Opportunities: for *the Path of the Just is as the Shining*

The Dedication.

*ning Light, that shineth more
and more unto a perfect Day.*

The great Honours and Revenues, still annex'd to some few Stations in the Church, are the chief Mark which Impiety, Envy, and Sacrilege aim at; and much they have to say, why Religion should be stripp'd of these superfluous and unprofitable Ornaments. But Malice it self is disarm'd, and all Objections are silenc'd, when those Rewards are bestow'd on Men, who by their Birth, and Virtues, and Experience, are every way quali-

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qualify'd for them ; whose Hereditary Fortunes, and Noble Natures, set them above all mean Designs of diverting the Patrimony of the Church to improper Uses ; and who are ready therefore to reflect back upon Religion the Advantages they derive from thence, and to abound in all the Offices of Hospitality and Charity, in proportion to what they enjoy. I need not say, how far these Excellent Qualities belong to your LORDSHIP, and are a confess'd Part of your Character.

When

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When we compare the Good which You have done, MY LORD, with that which You have receiv'd, it brings to mind the Apposite Passage of the Prophet: *The Liberal deviseth Liberal Things, and by Liberal Things shall he be establish'd.* Your LORDSHIP is an Illustrious Instance of this Truth; for the Blessings You have so plentifully scatter'd on those beneath You, have been multiply'd on your own Head from above; and You have reap'd the Benefits of a most generous and firm Friendship, in like manner as You sow'd them.

You

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You have given, my Lord, and it hath been given unto You; good Measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over: for with the same Measure, which You meted withal, hath it been (and may it ever be) measured to You again.

Your Happiness, MY LORD, is now as compleat as all the Prosperous Circumstances of Life can make it; and your Private Domestick Felicities (a Case rarely known) are no ways inferior to those of a more Publick and Splendid Nature.

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ture. For You are happy in the best of *Ladies*, as She is in the Tenderest of Husbands; You have the best of *Brothers*, and the best of *Children*; those *Arrows in the Hand of the Mighty Man*, which are both his Ornament and Defence: God be thanked, your *Quiver is full of them!* And *He* amongst them, who is to inherit your Ample Fortunes, doth, by his Early Love of Learning, and most Virtuous Disposition, promise, that he will one day do Honour even to that Honourable Stock from which he springs. With

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With such a Variety of Blessings hath God surrounded You! and, that nothing may be wanting, he hath blest'd You likewise with an Heart and Skill to use them. May You, thro' his Goodness, enjoy an uninterrupted Continuance of them; and such a Length of Days, as will give You Room to improve them to the utmost, for His Glory, and the Publick Benefit.

This, MY LORD, is the Unanimous Wish of all that have been Oblig'd by You, of All that Honour You; that

b 2 is,

The Dedication.

is, of All that truly Know
You; but of none more than
Him, who now offers these
Sermons to your Lordship,
and with that Sincerity which
becomes a Preacher of Di-
vine Truth, professes him-
self to be, by all the Tyes
of Esteem and Duty, Gra-
titude and Inclination,

YOUR LORDSHIP'S

Most Devoted, and

Ever Faithful Servant,

Francis Atterbury.

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Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of
Thanks be made for all Men; for Kings,
and all that are in Authority; that
We may lead a Quiet and Peaceable
Life, in all Godliness and Honesty:
For this is Good and Acceptable in the
Sight of God our Saviour.*

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*When he had sent the Multitude away,
he went up into a Mountain, apart, to
Pray.*

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The

The Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving.

A
S E R M O N .

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N

A T

W H I T E - H A L L ,

M A R 29, 1692.

P S A L M L. 14.

Offer unto God Thanksgiving.



AMONG the many Excellen-
cies of this pious Collection of
Hymns, for which so particular
a Value hath been set upon it by
the Church of God in all Ages, this is not
the

S E R M.

I.

S E R M. the least, that the true Price of Duties is

I. there justly stated; Men are call'd off from resting in the outward Shew of Religion, in Ceremonies and Ritual Observances; and taught rather to practise (that which was shadowed out by these Rites, and to which they are design'd to lead) sound inward Virtue, and Piety.

The several Composers of these Hymns were *Prophets*; Persons, whose Business it was; not only to foretel Events, for the Benefit of the Church in succeeding times, but to correct and reform also what was amiss in that Race of Men, with whom they liv'd and convers'd; to preserve a foolish People from Idolatry, and false Worship; to rescue the Law from corrupt Glosses, and superstitious Abuses; and to put Men in mind of (what they were so willing to forget) that Eternal and Invariable Rule, which was before these *Positive* Duties, would continue after them, and was to be observed, even Then, in preference to them.

The

Praise and Thanksgiving.

3

The Discharge, I say, of this part of **S E R M.**
the Prophetick Office taking up so much ^{I.}
room in the Book of *Psalms*; this hath
been one reason, among many others,
why they have been always so highly
esteem'd; because we are from hence
furnished with a proper Reply to an Ar-
gument commonly made use of by Un-
believers; who look upon all reveal'd
Religions, as Pious Frauds, and Impo-
stures, on the Account of the Prejudices
they have entertain'd in relation to That,
of the *Jews*: The whole of which they
first suppose to lie in External Perfor-
mances, and then easily persuade them-
selves, that God could never be the Au-
thor of such a mere Piece of Pageantry,
and empty Formality, nor delight in a
Worship which consisted purely in a
Number of odd unaccountable Ceremo-
nies. Which Objection of theirs we
should not be able thoroughly to answer,
unless we could prove (chiefly out of the
Psalms, and other Parts of the Prophe-
tick Writings) that the Jewish Religion
was somewhat more than bare Outside
and

TERM. and Shew; and that Inward Purity, and
 I. the Devotion of the Heart was a Duty
 Then, as well as Now. One great Instance of this Proof we have in the Words now before us; which are taken from a Psalm of *Asaph*, written on purpose to set out the Weakness and Worthlessness of External Performances, when compar'd with more Substantial and Vital Duties. To enforce which Doctrine, God himself is brought in, as delivering it. *Hear, O my People, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.* The Preface is very solemn; and therefore, what it ushers in, we may be sure, is of no common Importance: *I will not reprove thee for thy Sacrifices, or thy Burnt-Offerings, to have been continually before me.* That is, I will not So reprove thee for any Failures in thy Sacrifices and Burnt-Offerings, as if These were the Only, or the Chief Things I requir'd of thee. *I will take no Bullock out of thy House, nor He-goat out of thy Folds.* I prescribed not Sacrifices to thee, for my own sake,
 because

Praise and Thanksgiving.

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because I needed them: *For every Beast of the Forest is mine, and the Cattle upon a thousand Hills.* Mine they are; and were, before ever I commanded thee to offer them to Me; so that (as it follows) *If I were hungry, yet would I not tell thee; for the World is Mine, and the fulness thereof.* But can ye be so gross and senseless, as to think me liable to Hunger and Thirst? as to imagine that Wants of That kind can touch me? *Will I eat the Flesh of Bulls, or drink the Blood of Goats?* — Thus doth he expostulate severely with them, after the most graceful manner of the Eastern Poetry. The Issue of which is, a plain and full Resolution of the Case, in those few Words of the Text.—*Offer unto God Thanksgiving.* Would you do your Homage the most agreeable Way? would you render the most acceptable of Services? *Offer unto God Thanksgiving.*

The Use I intend to make of these Words is, from hence to raise some Thoughts about that very excellent and important Duty of Praise and Thankgiving:

SERM. giving: A Subject, not unfit to be dis-

I.  cours'd of, at this Time; whether we consider, either the more than ordinary Coldness that appears of late in Mens Tempers towards the Practice of this (or any other) Part of a warm and affecting Devotion; the Great Occasion of setting aside this particular Day in the Kalendar, some Years ago; or the New Instances of Mercy and Goodness, which God hath lately been pleas'd to bestow upon us: answering at last the many *Prayers* and *Fastings*, by which we have besought him so long for the Establishment of their Majesties Throne, and for the Success of their Arms; and giving us, in his own good time, an Opportunity of appearing before him in the more delightful Part of our Duty, *with*

Psal.xlii.4. *the voice of Joy and Praise, with a multitude that keep Holy days.*

Offer unto God Thanksgiving—Which that we may do, let us enquire first, how we are to *Understand* this Command of Offering Praise and Thanksgiving unto God;

Praise and Thanksgiving.

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God; and then how *Reasonable* it is, SERM.
that we should comply with it. I.

Our Enquiry into what is *meant* here, will be very short: For who is there, that understands any thing of Religion but knows, that the offering Praise and Thanks to God implies, our having a lively and devout Sense of his Excellencies, and of his Benefits; our recollecting them with Humility and Thankfulness of heart; and our expressing these inward Affections by suitable outward Signs; by reverent and lowly Postures of Body, by Songs, and Hymns, and Spiritual Ejaculations; either Privately, or Publickly; either in the Customary and Daily Service of the Church, or in its more Solemn Assemblies, conven'd upon Extraordinary Occasions? This is the Account, which every Christian easily gives himself of it; and which, therefore, it would be needless to enlarge upon. I shall only take notice on this Head, That Praise and Thanksgiving do, in Strictness of Speech, signify things somewhat different. Our
Praise

SERM. *Praise* properly terminates in God, on the

I. account of his natural Excellencies and Perfections; and is that Act of Devotion by which we confess and admire his several Attributes: But *Thanksgiving* is a narrower Duty, and imports only a grateful Sense and Acknowledgment of past Mercies. We praise God for all his glorious Acts, of every kind, that regard either Us, or Other Men; for his very *Vengeance*, and those *Judgments* which he sometimes sends *abroad in the Earth*: But we thank him (properly speaking) for the Instances of his *Goodness* alone; and for such only of these, as We our selves are some way concern'd in. This, I say, is what the two Words strictly imply: But since the Language of Scripture is generally less exact, and useth Either of them often to express the Other by, I shall not think my self oblig'd, in what follows, thus nicely always to distinguish them.

Now the great *Reasonableness* of this Duty of Praise or Thanksgiving, and our several *Obligations* to it, will appear; if
we

Praise and Thanksgiving.

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we either consider it *absolutely* in it self, SERM.
as the Debt of our Natures; or *compare* I.
it with other Duties, and shew the Rank
it bears among them; or set out, in the
last place, some of its peculiar *Properties*
and *Advantages*, with regard to the de-
vout Performer of it.

I. The Duty of Praise and Thank-
giving, consider'd *absolutely* in it self,
is, I say, the Debt, and Law of our Na-
ture. We had such Faculties bestowed on
us by our Creator, as made us capable
of satisfying this Debt, and obeying this
Law; and they never, therefore, work
more naturally and freely, than when
they are thus employ'd.

I.

'Tis one of the earliest Instructions
given us by Philosophy, and which hath
ever since been approved and inculcated
by the wisest Men of all Ages, That the
Original Design of making Man was,
that he might Praise and Honour Him
who made him. When God had finish'd
this goodly Frame of things, we call
the World, and put together the several

SER M. Parts of it, according to his infinite Wis-

I. dom, in exact Number, Weight, and Measure; there was still wanting a Creature in these lower Regions, that could apprehend the Beauty, Order, and exquisite Contrivance of it; that from contemplating the Gift, might be able to raise itself up to the great Giver, and do Honour to all his Attributes. Every thing indeed that God made, did, in some Sense, glorify its Author, inasmuch as it carried upon it the plain Mark and Impress of the Deity, and was an Effect worthy of that first Cause from whence it flow'd; and Thus might the *Heavens* be said, at the first Moment in which

Psal. xix. 1. they stood forth, *to declare his Glory, and the Firmament to shew his Handy-work*: But this was an imperfect, and defective Glory; the Sign was of no signification here below, whilst there was no one here as yet to take Notice of it, Man, therefore, was form'd to supply this Want; endued with Powers fit to find out, and to acknowledge these unlimited Perfections; and then put into this Tem-
ple

Praise and Thanksgiving.

II

ple of God, this lower World, as the SERM.
Priest of Nature, to offer up the Incense I.
of Thanks and Praise for the mute and the 
insensible Part of the Creation.

This, I say, hath been the Opinion all
along of the most thoughtful Men, down
from the most ancient Times: and tho'
it be not Demonstrative, yet is it what
we cannot but judge highly reasonable,
if we do but allow, that Man was made
for some End, or other; and that he is
capable of perceiving that End. For
then, let us search and enquire never so
much, we shall find no Other Account of
him that we can rest upon so well. If
we say, That he was made purely for the
good Pleasure of God; this is, in effect,
to say, that he was made for no Determi-
nate End; or for none, at least, that We
can discern. If we say, That he was de-
sign'd as an Instance of the Wisdom, and
Power, and Goodness of God; This in-
deed may be the Reason of his *Being* in
general; for 'tis the common Reason
of the *Being* of every Thing besides.
But it gives no account, why he was

SERMON made *such* a Being as he is, a reflecting, thoughtful, inquisitive Being: The particular Reason of this seems most aptly to be drawn from the Praise and Honour that was (not only to redound to God from him, but) to be given to God by him.

This Duty, therefore, is the Debt and Law of our Nature. And it will more distinctly appear to be such, if we consider the two Ruling Faculties of our Mind, the *Understanding* and the *Will*, apart; in both which it is deeply founded: In the Understanding, as in the Principle of Reason, which owns and acknowledges it; in the Will, as in the Fountain of Gratitude and Return, which prompts, and even constrains us to pay it.

Reason was given us as a Rule and Measure, by the Help of which we were to proportion our Esteem of every thing, according to the Degrees of Perfection and Goodness which we found therein. It cannot, therefore, if it doth its Office at all, but apprehend God as the best and most perfect Being; it must needs see, and own, and admire his infinite Perfections.

fections. And this is what is strictly SERM.
meant by *Praise*; which, therefore, is I.
expres'd in Scripture by *confessing to God*
and *acknowledging* him; by *ascribing* to
him what is his Due; and, as far as This
Sense of the Words reaches, 'tis impossi-
ble to *think* of God without praising him.
For it depends not on the Understanding
how it shall apprehend Things, any more
than it doth on the Eye, how Visible Ob-
jects shall appear to it.

The Duty takes the farther and surer
Hold of us, by the Means of our *Will*,
and that strong Bent towards *Gratitude*
which the Author of our Nature hath
implanted in it. There is not a more
active Principle than This in the Mind
of Man; and surely, that which deserves
its utmost Force, and should set all its
Springs a-work, is God; the Great and
Universal Benefactor, from whom alone
we receiv'd whatever we either have,
or are, and to whom we can possibly re-
pay nothing but our Praises, or (to speak
more properly on this Head, and ac-
cording to the strict Import of the Word)

S E R M. our Thanksgivings. *Who hath first given*

I. *to God,* (saith the great Apostle in his usual Figure) *and it shall be recompens'd unto him again?* A Gift, it seems, always requires a Recompence: Nay, but *of him, and through him, and to him are all things; Of him, as the Author; Thro' him, as the Preserver and Governor; To him, as the End and Perfection of all Things: To whom, therefore, (as it follows) be Glory for ever, Amen!*

Rom. xi.
35, 36.

Gratitude consists in an equal Return of Benefits, if we are able; or of Thanks, if we are not: Which Thanks, therefore, must rise always in Proportion as the Favours receiv'd are great, and the Receiver incapable of making any other Sort of Requital. Now, since no Man hath benefited God at any Time, and yet every Man, in each Moment of his Life, is continually benefited by him, what strong Obligations must we needs be under to Thank him? 'Tis true, our Thanks are really as insignificant to him, as any other Kind of Return would be, in themselves, indeed, they are worthless; but his

Praise and Thanksgiving.

¶

Goodness hath put a Value upon them: S E R M.

He hath declar'd, he will accept them in I.

lieu of the vast Debt we owe: and, after that, which is fittest for us, to dispute how they come to be taken as an *Equivalent*, or to pay them?

It is, therefore, the Voice of Nature (as far as Gratitude itself is so) that the Good Things we receive from above, should be sent back again thither in Thanks and Praises, *as the Rivers run into the Sea; to the Place* (the Ocean of Beneficence,) *from whence the Rivers come, thither should they return again.* Ecclef. i. 7.

II. We have consider'd the Duty II.
absolutely; we are now to *compare* it with Others, and to see what Rank it bears among them. And here we shall find, that, among all the Acts of Religion, immediately address'd to God, This is much the Noblest, and most Excellent; as it must needs be, if what hath been laid down be allow'd, that the End of Man's Creation was, to praise and glorify God. For That cannot but be the most noble

SERM. and excellent Act of any Being, which
 I. best answers the End and Design of it.

Other Parts of Devotion, such as *Confession* and *Prayer*, seem not Originally to have been design'd for Man, nor Man for them. They imply *Guilt*, and *Want*, with which the *State of Innocence* was not acquainted. Had Man continu'd in that Estate, his Worship (like the Devotions of Angels) had been paid to Heaven in pure Acts of Thanksgiving; and nothing had been left for him to do, beyond the enjoying the good Things of Life, as Nature directed, and praising the God of Nature who bestow'd them. But being fallen from Innocence, and Abundance; having contracted Guilt, and forfeited his Right to all Sorts of Mercies; Prayer and Confession became necessary for a time, to retrieve the Loss, and restore him to that State, wherein he should be able to live without them. These are fitted, therefore, for a lower Dispensation; before which, in Paradise, there was nothing but Praise, and after which, there shall be nothing but that,
 in

in Heaven. Our perfect State did at first, S E R M.
and will at last consist in the Performance
of this Duty; and herein, therefore, lies
the Excellence and the Honour of our
Nature. I.

'Tis the same way of Reasoning, by
which the Apostle hath given the prefe-
rence to Charity, beyond Faith, and
Hope, and every Spiritual Gift. *Charity* 1 Cor. xiii.
never faileth, saith he; meaning, that it
is not a Virtue useful only in This Life,
but will accompany us also into the
Next: *But whether there be Prophecies,*
they shall fail; whether there be Tongues,
they shall cease; whether there be Know-
ledge, it shall vanish away: These are Gifts
of a Temporary Advantage, and shall all
perish in the using. *For we know in part,* Ver. 9.
and we prophesy in part: Our present State
is imperfect; and, therefore, what belongs
to That, and only That, must be imper-
fect too. *But when that which is Perfect* Ver. 10.
is come, then that which is in Part shall
be done away. The Argument of St. Paul,
we see, which sets Charity above the
rest of Christian Graces, will give Praise
also

S E R M. also the Pre-eminence over all the Parts
 I. of Christian Worship; and we may conclude Our reasoning, therefore, as He doth His: *And now abideth Confession, Prayer, and Praise, these three; but the greatest of these is Praise.*

It is so, certainly, on other Accounts, as well as this; particularly, as it is the most *disinterested* Branch of our Religious Service; such as hath the most of God, and the least of our Selves in it, of any we pay; and therefore approaches the nearest of any to a pure, and free, and perfect Act of Homage. For though a good Action doth not grow immediately worthless by being done with the Prospect of Advantage, as some have strangely imagin'd; yet it will be allow'd, I suppose, that its being done without the Mixture of that End, or with as little of it as is possible, recommends it so much the more, and raises the Price of it. *Doth Job fear God for nought?* was an Objection of Satan; which implied, that those Duties were most valuable, where our own Interest was least aim'd at: And
 God

God seems, by the Commission he then S. E. R. M.
gave Satan to try Experiments upon *Job*, I.
thus far to have allow'd his Plea. Now 
our Requests for future, and even our
Acknowledgments of past Mercies center
purely in our selves; our own Interest is
the direct Aim of them. But Praise is
a generous and unmercenary Principle,
which proposes no other End to itself,
but to do, as is fit for a Creature en-
dow'd with such Faculties to do, to-
wards the most perfect and beneficent of
Beings; and to pay the willing Tribute
of Honour there, where the Voice of
Reason directs us to pay it. God hath
indeed annex'd a Blessing to the Duty;
and when we know this, we cannot chuse,
while we are performing the Duty, but
have some Regard to the Blessing which
belongs to it. However, that is not the
direct Aim of our Devotions, nor was it
the first Motive that stirr'd us up to them.
Had it been so, we should naturally have
betaken our selves to Prayer, and breath'd
out our Desires in That Form wherein
they are most properly convey'd.

SERM. In short, Praise is our most excellent Work, a Work common to the Church Triumphant and Militant, and which lifts us up into a Communion and Fellowship with Angels. The Matter, about which it is conversant, is always the Perfections of God's Nature; and the Act itself is the Perfection of Ours;

III. I come now, in the last Place, to set out some of its peculiar *Properties and Advantages*, which recommend it to the Devout Performer. And,

1st, It is the most *pleasing* Part of our Devotions. It proceeds always from a Lively Chearful Temper of Mind; and it cherishes and improves what it proceeds from. *For it is good to sing Praises unto our God*, (says one, whose Experience, in this Case, we may rely upon) *for it is pleasant, and Praise is comely*. Petition and Confession are the Language of the Indigent and the Guilty, the Breathings of a sad and a contrite Spirit: *Is any afflicted? Let him pray*: But,

Pf. cxlviii.
1.

Jam. v. 23.

is

is any merry? Let him sing Psalms. The S E R M.
most usual and natural way of Mens I.
expressing the Mirth of their Hearts, 
is, in a Song; and Songs are the very
Language of Praise; to the expressing
of which they are in a peculiar man-
ner appropriated, and are scarce of any
other Use in Religion. Indeed, the whole
Composition of this Duty is such, as
throughout speaks Ease and Delight to
the Mind: It proceeds from *Love*, and
from *Thankfulness*; from *Love*, the Foun-
tain of Pleasure, the Passion, which gives
every Thing we do, or enjoy, its Relish
and Agreeableness. From *Thankful-
ness*, which involves in it the Memory
of past Benefits; the actual Presence of
them to the Mind, and the repeated En-
joyment of them. And as its *Principle*
is, such is its *End* also. For it procu-
reth Quiet and Ease to the Mind, by do-
ing somewhat towards satisfying that
Debt which it labours under; by deli-
vering it of those Thoughts of Praise and
Gratitude, those Exultations it is so full
of; and which would grow uneasy and
trouble-

SER M. troublesome to it, if they were kept in.

1. If the Thankful *refrain'd*, it would be
 *Pain and Grief to them: But then, then*
 Pl. lxiii. 5. *is their Soul satisf'd as with Marrow*
and Fatness, when their Mouth praiseth
God with Joyful Lips.

2. It is another distinguishing Property of Divine Praise, that it enlargeth the Powers and Capacities of our Souls; turning them from little and low Things, upon their Greatest and Noblest Object, the Divine Nature; and employing them in the Discovery and Admiration of those several Perfections that adorn it. We see, what Difference there is between Man and Man; such, as there is hardly greater between Man and Beast: And this proceeds chiefly from the different Sphere of Thought which they act in, and the different Objects they converse with. The Mind is essentially the same in the Peasant and the Prince; the Forces of it naturally equal in the untaught Man, and the Philosopher: Only the One of these is busied in mean Affairs, and within narrower

rower Bounds, the Other Exercises him-^{SER M.}
self in things of weight and moment;
and This it is that puts the wide Distance
between them. Noble Objects are to
the Mind, what the Sun-Beams are to
a Bud, or Flower: They open and un-
fold, as it were, the Leaves of it; put
it upon exerting and spreading it self
every way; and call forth all those
Powers, that lie hid and lock'd up in
it. The Praise and Admiration of God,
therefore, brings this Advantage along
with it, that it sets our Faculties upon
their full Stretch, and improves them to
all the Degrees of Perfection, of which
they are capable.

3. It, farther, promotes in us an ex-
quisite Sense of God's Honour, and an
high Indignation of Mind at every
thing that openly profanes it. For what
we value and delight in, we cannot with
Patience hear slighted, or abus'd. Our
Own Praises, which we are constantly
putting up, will be a *Spur* to us toward
procuring and promoting the Divine
Glory in every Other Instance; and will
make

SER M. make us set our Faces against all open
 I. and avowed Impieties. Which, methinks, should be consider'd a little by such as would be thought not to be wanting in this Duty, and yet are often silent under the foulest Dishonours done to Religion, and its great Author. For tamely to hear God's Name and Worship vilified by Others, is no very good Argument, that we have been us'd to Honour and Reverence him in good earnest, Our selves.

4. It will, beyond all this, work in us a deep Humility, and Consciousness of our own Imperfections. Upon a frequent Attention to God and his Attributes, we shall easily discover our own Weakness and Emptiness; Our swelling Thoughts of our selves will abate, and we shall see and feel, that we *are altogether lighter to be laid in the Balance, than Vanity.* And this is a Lesson, which, to the greatest Part of Mankind, is, I think, very well worth learning. We are naturally Presumptuous and Vain; full of Our selves, and regardless of

Psal. lxi.

of every thing besides: Especially, when S E R M.
 some little Outward Privileges distinguish II
 Us from the rest of Mankind; then, 'tis 
 odds, but we look into Our selves with
 great degrees of Complacency; and are
wiser (and better every way) *in our* Prov. xxvi.
own Conceit than *seven Men, that can* ^{16.}
render a Reason. Now nothing will
 contribute so much to the Cure of
 this Vanity, as a due Attention to
 God's Excellencies, and Perfections: By
 comparing These with Those which, we
 imagine, belong to us, we shall learn,
not to think of our selves more highly Rom. xii.
than we ought to think of our selves, ^{3.}
but to think soberly: We shall find more
 Satisfaction in looking upwards, and
 humbling our selves before our com-
 mon Creator, than in casting our Eyes
 downwards with Scorn upon our Fel-
 low Creatures, and setting at nought
 any Part of the Work of his Hands.
 The vast Distance we are at from
 Real and Infinite Worth will astonish
 us so much, that we shall not be
 tempted to value Our selves upon those
VOL. I. C lesser

SERM. lesser Degrees of Pre-eminence, which
 I. Custom, or Opinion, or some little ac-
 cidental Advantages have given Us over
 other Men.

I shall mention but one Use of it
 more, and 'tis This; That a conscien-
 tious Praise of God will keep Us back
 from all false and mean Praises, all ful-
 som and servile Flatteries, such as are
 in Use among Men. Praising, as 'tis
 commonly manag'd, is nothing else but
 a Tryal of Skill upon a Man, how
 many good Things we can possibly say
 of him. All the Treasuries of Oratory
 are ranfack'd, all the fine things that
 ever were said are heap'd together, for
 his sake; and No matter, whether it
 belongs to him, or not; so there be but
 enough on't. Which is one deplorable
 Instance, among a thousand, of the Base-
 ness of human Nature, its small Re-
 gard to Truth and Justice; to Right,
 or Wrong; to what is, or is not to
 be praised. But He, who hath a deep
 Sense of the Excellencies of God upon
 his Heart, will make a God of nothing
 besides.

besides. He will give every One his SERM.
just Encomium, Honour where Honour I.
is due, and as much as is due; because 
it is his Duty to do so: But the Honour of God will suffer him to go no farther. Which Rule, if it had been observ'd, a Neighbouring Prince, (who now, God be thanked, needs Flattery somewhat more than ever he did) would have wanted a great deal of that Incense which hath been offer'd up to him by his Adorers.

Upon these Grounds doth the Duty of Praise stand, and these are the Obligations that bind us to the Performance of it. 'Tis the End of our Being, and the very Rule and Law of Our Nature; flowing from the Two great Fountains of human Action, the Understanding and the Will, naturally, and almost necessarily. It is the most Excellent Part of our Religious Worship; enduring to Eternity, after the rest shall be *done away*; and paid even Now, in the frankest manner, with the least Regard to our own Interest. It recom-

SERMON. mends it self to us by several peculiar

1. Properties, and Advantages; as it carries more Pleasure in it, than all other Kinds of Devotion; as it enlarges and exalts the several Powers of the Mind; as it breeds in us an exquisite Sense of God's Honour, and a Willingness to promote it in the World: As it teaches us to be Humble and Lowly Our selves; and yet preserves us from base and sordid Flattery, from bestowing mean and undue Praises upon Others.

IV. I shall now shut up the Arguing Part of this Discourse, with a short Application to Two sorts of Persons; the *Careless*, and the *Profane*; One of which Neglects the Practice of so Important a Duty, the Other lives in an open Defiance of it.

A *Neglect* in this Case, doth certainly involve in it a very high Degree of Guilt and Folly: For 'tis (we see) the Neglect of our Duty, and Honour, our Interest, and our Pleasure, all at once. 'Tis to omit doing that, which we were purposely

Praise and Thanksgiving.

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posely sent into the World to do; and SERM.
without doing which, all the other Af- I.
fairs of Life are but one continued Imper- 
tinnence: That, which we have so many
Obligations to do, and no Excuse for lea-
ving undone; since Praise is within every
Man's Reach; there is no one but hath
it in his Power, to be Thankful.

God commanded the *Jews* to acknow-
ledge his Sovereignty and Beneficence, by
Sacrifices; a Costly and a Troublesome
way of Worship. Of Us he requires on-
ly the Cheap and Easy Offering of Our
Thanks and Praises—and shall we not
pay it? Alas! We do not! Every thing
proves an Hindrance to us in the way
to this our Bounden Duty and Service:
We are too idle, or too busy to attend up-
on it. And even when we find Leisure
enough; yet how cold and how insensi-
ble are we, whilst 'tis going forward! *We* Mat. xv. 8.
draw nigh unto him with our Mouths, and
Honour him with our Lips (perhaps);
but our Hearts are far from him. And
do we then know, what it is to praise
God becomingly? Do we remember,
C 3 how

S E R M. how the great Teacher of Thanksgiving

I. summons up every One of his Faculties
 Ps. ciii. 1. to assist him in it? *Bless the Lord, O my Soul! And all that is within me, bless his holy Name!* 'Tis a Work that will employ *all that is within us*, will call for all the Application, and Vigour, and Warmth, that we can possibly bestow upon it. Cold and languid Praise, is no Praise; this Sacrifice can be no longer acceptable than 'tis burning.

To those Men, who live in the *Contempt* of this Duty, we have also somewhat to say, if they would but hear us. They are generally such, as pretend a high Sense of the Dignity of human Nature, and bear no small Respect to their own Understandings. Now, though Other Parts of Religious Worship should happen to be too mean and low for such great Minds to take up with; yet This, methinks, might deserve to be thought Equal to them. Let Confession and Prayer go only for the Arts of Whining and Begging, and be as much beneath them as they imagine; yet, surely,

ly, Praise hath somewhat in it so great, S E R M.
and so noble, as may invite them to I.
practise it. 'Tis a Subject, fit for the
most enlarg'd Capacities to dwell on;
and such an one, as even Those would
certainly find themselves rais'd and im-
prov'd by.

If it were possible for These Men to
have a Relish of any thing in this Kind,
we would desire them to make the Tryal;
to take the Hymn, call'd *Te Deum*, into
their Hands, and to read it attentively;
and then tell us truly, whether they did
not find their Minds fill'd, and their Af-
fections strangely rais'd by the Images
which there occur'd to them; Whether
they did not perceive themselves to be
somewhat above themselves, whilst they
were perusing it. And these Effects, of
which every Man, who joins in that
Hymn, must be sensible, are owing to
that Majestick Plainness and Simplici-
ty of Thought which goes through it
Unadorn'd by Words, Unenliven'd by
Figures! 'Tis the Matter alone which
supports the Expression: And because

S E R M. the Matter therein contain'd, is, the Excellencies of the Divine Nature, the pure and genuine Objects of Praise; therefore is the hymn itself so lofty, and moving.

I.

But, alas! We speak in vain! The Men, who are bold enough to slight a Duty of this Rank and Character, will easily slight every thing that can be offer'd to bring them to it. All we can say to them is, that, as God made them for his Glory, so he will certainly serve the Ends of that Glory upon them, one way or another. And therefore, if they will not freely Praise him for his Goodness in this World, they shall surely, whether they will or no, contribute to the Praise of his Justice in the next.

V. Thus have I attempted to Describe this Duty, to set out the great Reasonableness, and to stir You up to the Practice of it. And certainly, it was never more reasonable, than on This Occasion, when we commemorate such

1

Past,

Past, and feel such Present Mercies. The **SERMON**
Restoration of the Monarchy, and of **I.**
all those Blessings in Church and State
that came back with it; the Re-esta-
blishment of the *Beauty of Praise* in
our Sanctuary; the Return of Peace and
Plenty, of Learning, and all the Arts
of Civil Life; the Reducing us from
Confusion and Rage, into Order and
Friendliness, and making Us a Nation
at Unity in itself; Lovely at home,
and Terrible abroad. These were such
sound and substantial Blessings as will
wear well; and, though done a great
while ago, will yet deserve a great while
hence a Place in our Kalendars. Nei-
ther Love to our Country, nor the
Honour we bear to Those who rule
over Us; neither Our Gratitude to
God, nor our Good-will towards Men,
will suffer such Wonders of Providence
to slip out of our Minds; or the Day,
in which they were brought about, easily
to grow Old upon Us.

The

SER M. The Benefits, we then receiv'd, were

I. indeed exceeding great, and would justly claim a larger Share in our present Reflections, had not the Goodness of God taken off our Thoughts a little from that Subject, by calling us to the Acknowledgment of New Loving Kindnesses. For, behold, what Glorious Things the Lord hath again wrought for Us! Blessing their Majesties Forces with a great and signal Victory over the most haughty and insolent of Enemies: A Victory so Early, so Complete, and so Cheaply purchas'd, that we have some Reason to hope, it may fix the Fortune of the War, and put an End to the Destructions of the Destroyer; to whom we trust, God hath now said, as to the Sea itself, — *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and Here shall thy proud Waves be stayed.*

Job
xxxviii. 11.

Blessed be God, who did not utterly cast out our Prayers, and our Supplications; but delay'd only to answer them, till a *Day of Salvation*, till an *acceptable Time*, when the Mercy would be dearer

Praise and Thanksgiving.

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dearer to Us, and his Goodness more **SER. M.**
remarkably seen in bestowing it! **I.**

When we were alarm'd with Invasions from Abroad, and Conspiracies at Home; when Men threatned to *swallow us up quick*; when Success was now so requisite to preserve the Honour of the Nation, to support their Majesties Throne, and to strengthen the Hands of Their Allies: Then did he appear, and own Our Cause; Then was the God of Hosts our Strength, and our Shield. Surely, *There is no End of that Goodness*, which continues thus to pursue us; which vouchsafes to establish to Us, and to our Posterity, those Blessings, under which we have been so unthankful, and so ungrateful already! And to give us fresh Opportunities of Praise, which I hope we shall make a better Use of!

Let us, therefore, *Offer unto God Thanksgiving*; and not That only, but *Our selves also, our Souls and Bodies, to be a Reasonable, Holy, and Lively Sacrifice*: Let us render him the Fruit
of

SERM. of our Lips, and the Obedience of our

I. Lives, that these Blessings may not prove
 a Curse to us; but that He may still be
 Our God, and We may be his People.

*To Him, with the Son, and the Holy
 Ghost, be all Honour, Praise and
 Glory, henceforth, and for evermore!
 Amen.*

The

The POWER of Charity to Cover Sin.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

President and Governors

Of the HOSPITALS of

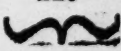
Bridewell and Bethlehem,

BRIDEWELL-CHAPEL,

August 16, 1694.

I St. PETER iv. 8.

Charity shall Cover the Multitude of Sins.

GOD be thanked, the frequent Re-SERM.
turns of such Pious Meetings as II.
these, in this Rich and Charitable City, 
have

SERM. have made the general Argument of
 II. CHARITY, the Nature and Chief Properties, the several Grounds and Reasons of this Duty so well understood, that, to Entertain You with a Discourse at large on that Subject; would be a very needless and useless Attempt. So many Eminent Pens have gone before, in This Way, as have left it very difficult for those who come after, either to say any thing, which They *have not* said, or not to say That much worse, which They *have*.

Upon This Account; and because, indeed, I take General Discourses, for the most part, to be like Large Prospects, where the Eye is lost by the wide Compass it takes, and sees so many things at once, that it sees nothing distinctly; I have chosen at present to point Your Thoughts only on One particular Property of this Great Virtue, which hath been not often handled, I think; and even Then, not always well understood: It is That, which the Apostle St. Peter proposeth to Us, in those few Words I have

have read to You—*Charity shall Cover* SERM.
the Multitude of Sins. II.

Few as they are, they will sufficiently employ our Thoughts at this time, if we consider, in the

First place, The several Explications I.
 that have been given of them, and satisfy our selves, which of These ought to take place. If,

Secondly, We free That One True II.
 Genuine Meaning of the Words from the Exceptions which lie against it. If,

Thirdly, We establish the Truth laid III.
 down upon its Proper Grounds and Reasons. And if,

Fourthly, We make some few useful IV.
 Deductions from it.

After this is done, the little Time that V.
 is left, will properly be spent in applying what hath been said more immediately to the Occasion of This Present Assembly.

I

Cha-

SERM. *Charity shall Cover the Multitude of*

II. *Sins.*

I

There is scarce any Man, I believe, who hears these Words, that is not ready to frame to himself This Sense of them; "That the Virtue of *Charity* is of so great price in the Sight of God, that Those Persons, who possess and exercise it in any Eminent manner, are peculiarly Entitled to the Divine Favour and Pardon, with regard to numberless Slips and Failings in their Duty, which they may be Otherwise guilty of: This Great Christian Perfection, of which they are Masters, shall make many Little Imperfections to be overlook'd and unobserv'd; it shall *Cover the multitude of Sins.*

This, I say, is the account, which every Man naturally gives himself of these Words, at his first hearing them; and it is for That very Reason probable, that This is the True and Genuine account of them. For, supposing the Original

Original Text to be well and clearly rendered in our Version, it will, I am of Opinion, be found, that That Sense of any Passage, which, after attending to the Force of the Words, and to their Coherence with what goes before, and what follows, First occurs to the Mind, is generally the Justest and Truest. SERM. II.

This hath not however been always thought a Good Rule in the present Case. For several Pious, and some Judicious Men, finding the Words, in their plain and familiar meaning, to carry somewhat of a suspicious sound with them, and to border a little (as They Thought) on the Papal Doctrine of *Works Meritorious*, have, therefore, taken some Pains to give a Different Interpretation of them. I shall offer, first, to your view some of these mistaken Senses, e'er I come to consider that which, I think, was intended by St. *Peter*; because Each of these doth certainly propose a Clear and Apposite Truth to us, tho' perhaps not truly drawn from the Passage now before us.

SERM.

II.



First, then, the Words have been understood to contain an account of that particular Instance of Charity, which we call *Good-Nature*: by which we pass by little Sights and Injuries, interpret things in the Best sense, are not apt to take, or return an Affront, not forward to publish, or believe an ill Report of any One: by which we turn our Eyes always towards the Best side of a Man, and chuse rather to look on his Virtues than his Failures; and by which we constantly interpose our good Offices, wherever we think they may be serviceable, either to the composing Old Differences, or preventing New ones.

And This Sense is grounded upon a suppos'd Relation there is between These Words in *St. Peter*, and Those in the *Proverbs*; *Hate stirreth up Strifes, but Love covereth all Sins*. Now, tho' indeed, in *Our Translation*, there is some Similitude between the Words of the Text, and this Passage in the *Proverbs*; yet, as it lies in the *Septuagint-Version* (which

(which the Apostles made use of) it SERM.
 bears no such Resemblance to the Text II.
 as may make it probable that the One
 ought to be Expounded by the Other.
 On the contrary it deserves observation,
 that, wherever the *Greek Phrase**, which
 is here translated by *Covering Sin*, oc-
 curs in Scripture, it constantly signifies See Psal.
 that Pardon of Sin which proceeds from lxxxiv. 1.
God, not any Instances of Good Nature xxxii. 1.
 and Forgiveness exercised by *Men*. and Neh. iv. 5.

We may farther observe, that This
 Sense of the Words is by no means full
 enough to bear the Weight of that em-
 phatic and solemn Preface with which
 the Apostle introduces them: *but above*
all things (says He, in the Words im-
 mediately before the Text) *have fervent*
Charity among your selves: for Charity
shall Cover the multitude of Sins. Ἐκτενῆ
ἀγάπῃ, intense, or fervent Charity must
 signify somewhat more than the bare Acts
 and Offices of *Good-Nature*. If they, to

* Καλὴν ἀγάπην.

SERM. whom the Apostle wrote, were *above all*

II. *things* to have *fervent Charity* among themselves, it could not be for This Reason, because Charity would render them inoffensive towards Others, and not easy to be offended Themselves. For tho' This be a commendable Degree of Virtue, and very fit to be enjoined, because not frequently practis'd; yet can it not deserve that peculiar Emphasis and Stress which is here laid upon it. Especially, if we consider it as succeeding the mention of those more important and necessary Duties, to which the Apostle exhorts them in the preceding Verse, the *being sober, and watching unto Prayer*: Above all which, it cannot be suppos'd, that the Duty of conversing with one another according to the Rules of *Good-Nature* and *Gentleness* should be enjoin'd.

The Words, therefore, have, in the *Second* place, been thus also interpreted, *Charity shall cover the multitude of Sins*; that is, says the excellent *Grotius*, it will have a mighty Influence towards reclaim-
ing

ing Sinners from the Error of their Ways; S E R M.
 the Consequence of which is, That the II.
 Sins of Men thus reclaim'd, are pardon'd,
 or cover'd. Charity, which is an exalted
 Love of God and our Neighbour, will
 make us industrious in procuring Glory
 to the One, by the Salvation of the
 Other. It will create a mighty Zeal for
 the Interests of Virtue, and the Honour
 of the Gospel, and the Good of Souls;
 and it will run through all the Difficul-
 ties that lie in the way towards so good
 an End, with Readiness and Pleasure. It
 will not be frightened from making At-
 tempts even on Those of the first Rank
 in Wickedness, the Worst and most
 Hardned of Men; because it knows, that
Their Revolt from Sin to Virtue (if it
 can be compass'd) will be of mighty
 Consequence to Religion, and will pro-
 bably draw whole Troops of Common
 Sinners along with it: The Sense they
 have of their Own Sins being cover'd,
 will make *Them* also eager in their turn
 to cover those of Other Men.

SERM. This is a very Good and Pious Sense

II. of the Words, but (I believe, it will be allow'd me) no very Easy and Natural One: they must be rack'd e'er they can be brought to confess This Meaning. However, it was what that Learned Person was led into by a former Explication he had made of a Parallel place in *St. James*; which I shall crave leave to produce at length, and to comment upon, because I take it to be the *Key* of the Text, which easily and readily lets us into the True Sense of it. *Brethren* (says *St. James*, at the Conclusion of his Epistle) *if any One of You do Err from the Truth, and One Convert him, let him know, that he which converteth a Sinner from the Error of his Ways, shall save a Soul from Death, and shall hide a Multitude of Sins.* He intended to shut up the Epistle with recommending to them one of the most important and useful Virtues, That of endeavouring the Conversion and Reformation of Men. And he intended also to stir them up to the Exercise of this Vir-

James v.
19, 20.

rue by the most powerful Motives he SERM.
 could propose: What are they? Why, II.
 first, That *He who converteth a Sinner*
from the Error of his ways, should con-
 sider, that he *saveth a Soul from Death*;
 and then, secondly, and chiefly, That
 he *shall [also] cover a multitude of Sins*.
 Whose Sins? Those of the Converted
 Person? Nay, but That was already
 said, and much more than that in the
 foregoing Motive, *He shall save a Soul*
from Death: for surely the saving a soul
 from Death, necessarily includes and pre-
 supposes the Remission of its Sins. It
 must then be meant of His Sins who
 makes, and not of His who becomes,
 the Convert: And Thus indeed this
 Last Clause carries a New Motive in it,
 distinct from That in the Former; and
 such an One as riseth beyond it, and
 more sensibly touches those to whom
 it is address'd; and was therefore fit to
 be propos'd in the Last place, and to be
 left, as a Sting, in their Minds. 'Tis
 as if St. James had said more at length,
 "Let such an one know, that He shall,

SER. M. " by This Means, not *only* save a Soul
 II. " from Death, (though This it self be a
 " very Great and Desirable Thing) but
 " shall *also* (which more nearly con-
 " cerns him) secure to himself on this
 " account the Pardon of many Sins.

Now the Words of St. *James* here explain'd, are exactly the same with those of St. *Peter*, in my Text; and the Occasion upon which they are introduced, and their dependence on the Context is much the same in both Places; except only that they are used in my Text as a Motive to Charity in general, but in St. *James*, with regard only to One main and eminent Branch of it, the Conversion of Souls: What therefore St. *James* means by them, is meant also by St. *Peter*: and, consequently, that most Obvious and Easy Sense, which I mention'd at the Entrance of this Discourse, is, in all probability, the Truest: And, as such, I shall take the liberty here once again to repeat it. It is This,
 " That the Virtue of Charity is of so
 " great price in the sight of God, that
 " They,

“ They, who possess and exercise it in SERM.
 “ any Eminent Manner, are peculiarly II.
 “ entitled to the Divine Favour and Par-
 “ don, with regard to numberless Slips
 “ and Failings in their Duty, which they
 “ may be Otherwise guilty of. This
 “ great Christian Perfection, of which
 “ they are Masters, shall make many
 “ little Imperfections to be over-look’d
 “ and unobserv’d; It shall Cover the
 “ multitude of Sins.

Nor are there wanting Parallel Places
 in other parts of Holy Writ, which con-
 firm this Interpretation of the Words
 and the Doctrine contain’d in it. For
 besides those Passages in the Apocryphal
 Writers, which directly affirm that *Alms* Tob. xii. 9.
shall purge away Sin, and that *As Water* Ecclef. iii.
quencheth Flaming Fire, so Alms ma- 30.
keth an Atonement for Sins; there are in
 the Books of *Proverbs*, and *Daniel*, two
 Texts, very express to this purpose: In
 the first of these the *Wise Man* declares,
 that *by Mercy and Truth Iniquity is pur-* Pro. xvi. 6.
ged; and in the Latter the Prophet coun-
 sels *Nebuchadnezzar*, to *break off his* Dan. iv.
Sins 27.

SER. M. *Sins by Righteousness*, (or rather, as it
 II. is in all the Ancient Versions, to redeem
 his Sins by Alms-deeds) *and his Iniqui-
 ties by shewing Mercy to the Poor*. And
 were it proper in this place to vouch the
 Testimony of the Earliest Writers of the
 Church, it were easy to produce, from
 their Works, Passages without Number,
 wherein they speak the same Language.

I fear I have been tedious in settling
 the *Sense of the Words*: but it is no
 more than was requisite, in so important
 a Point, so little insisted on from the Pul-
 pit; and which may be thought liable to
 some Just *Exceptions*.

II. *These* I am now, in the *Second Place*,
 to propose, and shall endeavour to re-
 move. The doing of which will give
 me an Occasion of clearing the Sense,
 and limiting the Bounds of this Truth
 more exactly and fully.

The *First* and Great Exception against
 This way of Expounding the Text is,
 that it gives too great a Colour to the
 Popish

Popish Doctrines of *Merit* and *Supererogation*; and seems to lessen the Worth of the only True and Proper Satisfaction for Sin, made by our Saviour on the Cross. For, at This Rate, what need of Remission of Sin in Every Case by the Blood of Christ, since We ourselves are in Good Measure capable of making the Atonement? We who have it, it seems, in our power, by the Exercise of one Particular Virtue to secure a Pardon to our selves for neglecting all the rest; and can blot out the Remembrance of an Ill-spent Life, by a few Acts of Charity at the Close of it? As if God were so much beholden to us for our Good Deeds, as to be bound, for their Sakes, to forgive us our Ill Ones! Or, as if the Performance of Our Duty in One Case, could make any manner of Amends to Him for our Non-performance of it in Another! This, say They, is very Easy and Comfortable Divinity!

To take off the Force of this Objection, it will be requisite to reflect a little

serm. tie on these following Considerations.

II. And,

1st, We must Explain our selves a little more particularly, What is to be understood by that *Charity*, to which the Promise of the Text is made; What it is in the *Nature* and *Extent*, and what in the *Intention* and *Degree* of it.

As to its *Nature* and *Extent*, it must be understood to signify not barely *Acts of Relief* to the Poor and Needy, as the Vulgar and Confin'd Use of the Word imports; but, more largely, all the several Ways of *Universal Beneficence* and *Kindness*, by which one Man can be serviceable to another. Farther, it expresses not the *Outward Material Act* only, but must be suppos'd to take in also the *Vital Form* of it, that *Inward Principle* of a *Sincere Love* towards *God* and *Man*, from whence it regularly flows; and separated from which, the meer external Act is a Lifeless and Useless Performance. And Then, even of Charity thus Largely understood, it is *not a common Degree* that is meant here; 'Tis to an Intense or

Fer-

Fervent Charity, to a mighty and extra-^{SERM.}
ordinary measure of it, that this mighty ^{II.}
and extraordinary Blessing is expressly said
to belong.

2dly, Even of this Exalted Degree of
Charity it is not said, *that it shall co-
ver all manner of Transgressions*, how
Gross and Heinous soever; The Words of
the Text do by no means carry us to as-
sert thus much concerning it: but only
(as you have heard them Explain'd to
You) seem to say, that it shall be our
Excuse for many lesser Neglects and
Failings in our Duty, many Sins of In-
firmity, Surprise, and Daily Incurſion;
which are properly enough ſtyl'd *the
multitude of Sins*: It *shall Cover* ſuch
Offences only, as are conſiſtent with a
ſtate of True *Charity*; and ſurely Thoſe
cannot be very Groſs and Preſumptuous.
For He, who lives in the Perfect Exer-
ciſe of that Fervent *Charity*, which the
Text recommends, abounding Inwardly
and Outwardly in all the various In-
ſtances and Expreſſions of it, end in
 thoſe ſeveral Virtues and Graces which
do

SER M. do naturally attend it: I say, whoever

II. he is, that is thoroughly posselt and acted by this Divine Principle of *Love*, cannot be supposed capable of committing any Heinous Sins, *whilst* he is under the Guidance of it: And as for Those, which he had fallen into *before* the attainment of this Gift, They were certainly remitted also and cover'd, *before* the attainment of it; else, doubtless, he had never attain'd it. So that no Great Guilt of any kind can well be thought to harbour in that Breast, where true Charity dwells.

Indeed, it is not universally certain, that, whenever God remits the *Guilt* of Sin, he remits the Punishment too (the *Temporal Punishment*, I mean) for Wicked Men, upon their Return to Virtue; do not seldom find, to their Cost, that a Sin may be pardoned, and yet all the Ill Consequences of it not prevented; and they can, therefore, often trace the Steps of their former Misdoings, in the several Evils of Life that afterward befall them. And in This Sense, therefore, it

it may be, and is probably true, that **SERM.**
 Charity shall cover many Sins, even of **II.**
 the first Magnitude; *i. e.* it shall prevent
 the Temporal Inflictions due to them,
 and often, even after Pardon obtain'd,
 pursuing the Committers of them: But
 it contributes to a removal of the *Guilt*
 only of such Frailties and Infirmities
 of a lesser Size, as may be thought con-
 sistent with a state of Charity. And
 therefore, to except against the Doctrine
 laid down, as encouraging the Charita-
 ble Man to expect Remission of all man-
 ner of Sins, how great and how nume-
 rous soever, is to load it with a Diffi-
 culty which doth no ways belong to it.
 But,

3dly, Even as to these slighter Omi-
 sions and Failings, it is not pretended,
 that they are cover'd by Acts of Mercy
 and Charity in any sense, but what in-
 cludes the Application of the Merits of
 our Saviour's Blood, the only Fountain
 of Satisfaction for all Kind of Sins, for
 the Least as well as the Greatest. It is
 true indeed, and granted, that the
 Blood

SER M. Blood of Christ alone can expiate Sin.

II.



However, this hinders not but that God may make such and such Acts of Ours the *Conditions* and Grounds (as it were) of applying the Virtue of that Blood to us. And thus Our Good Works, tho' they are not the *Meritorious*, yet may become, if I may so speak, the *Occasional* Cause of Pardon and Grace to us. And if This be establishing the Popish Doctrine of Salvation by Works, then hath our Saviour Himself, I fear, establish'd it, in that Divine Form of Prayer, in which he hath taught us to say, *Forgive Us Our Trespases, as We forgive Those that Trespas against Us. As We forgive Those! i. e. Inasmuch as, on That very Account (among Others) because, we forgive Those that trespass against Us.* Where, we see, the Exercise of one great Instance of Charity, Forgiveness of Enemies, is made the Ground of our asking and expecting Forgiveness from God.

4thly and Lastly, It follows not, that because so Vast a Recompence is promis'd

to

to a Fervent Charity, therefore the Exercise of it is in the way of *Supererogation*, so that we might have let it alone without Fault or Blame. We may be strictly, and by the very Letter of the Law, obliged to it; and yet it may include so high a pitch of perfection, and one so seldom attain'd, that God may think fit, wherever it is attain'd, mightily to reward it; and to encourage us towards doing our Duty in some One Great Point, by an assurance, that in many smaller Instances he will not be *Extreme to mark what is done amiss* by us. Our Gracious Master deals with Us in This Case, as a Man oftentimes doth with his Servant; If he be Trusty and Faithful to him in a Business of Great Concern and Moment, tho' his Duty bound him to be so, yet shall that piece of Eminent Service excuse many Neglects and Failings upon Other Occasions.

There is yet a *Second Objection*, tho' indeed so slight an One, as, after the Former hath been removed, is scarce worth mentioning. It is taken from that Say-

Vol. I.

E

ing

SERM. ing of our Lord, That They *will* Love
 II. much, to whom much *hath been* forgiven.

Contrary to which, the Text, as here expounded, seems to affirm, that They who *do* love much, *shall* have much Forgiven them. But these two Truths are easily reconcil'd. For it is not hard to understand, how That, which is the *Cause* of a thing in One Respect, may be the *Effect* of it in another. And, accordingly, it may be very true, that He, who is Forgiven much, will, for that very reason, Love much: And it may be as True, that He, who thus Loveth much, because much hath been Forgiven him, shall, on that very account, have much more Forgiven him. 'Tis just the same Case as between Me and my Friend: I may passionately love him, because he hath pardon'd me the Great and many Injuries I formerly did him, while we were at Variance: And again, the Knowledge he hath of my Love, may incline him to pass over any Future Mistakes and Miscarriages, whereby I may happen to offend him.

The

The Doctrine being thus fix'd, and SERM.
 freed from Exception; I go on, as I pro- II.
 pos'd, in the *Third* place, to enquire in-
 to the *Grounds and Reasons* of this Won-
 drous Efficacy, so particularly attributed
 to the Exercise of Charity: For we read
 not that God hath annex'd this Promise
 to any Other Grace, or Virtue of the Chri-
 stian Life whatsoever, but to This only,
 that it *shall cover Sin*; of which these se-
 veral Accounts may, with some Proba-
 bility, be given.

1st, That It was really more fit and
 proper that such a Return as this should
 be made to Charity, than to any Other
 Virtue; because it adjusts and propor-
 tions the Reward of Acting to the Act it
 self; and makes the Duty of Man to-
 wards God, and the Blessing of God up-
 on the Performance of that Duty, to
 have a near Relation and Resemblance to
 Each other. I explain my self in this man-
 ner: The Chief Employment, the highest
 Point and Perfection of Charity is, to
 pass by the Offences and Injuries of Men;

SERM. to pardon the Malice of our Enemies, and

II. the Ingratitude of our Friends. To Him therefore, who advances to this Height of Virtue, God hath very *aptly* and *suitably* promis'd, that His Faults and Offences too shall be pardon'd: as he deals with his Neighbour, so will God deal with Him: Mercy shall be shew'd upon Him, who shews Mercy: if we forgive Other Men Their Trespases, then will our Heavenly Father forgive Us Our Trespases also. There is, You see, a strict Analogy betwixt the Reward annex'd, and one Great Instance of the Virtue enjoin'd: which is God's Method of putting us in Mind of what we are to Do, by his Promises, as well as his Commands; and of exciting Us to endeavour after a Perfection, not easily attain'd, by assuring Us, that the Exercise of it shall, in the very same kind, return doubly and trebly into our Own Bosom. But,

2dly, The Good and Charitable Man is peculiarly entitled to the Pardon of many Sins, because he is in a peculiar manner liable to incur the Guilt of many;

ny; either from the *Natural Frame and* ERM.
Make of his Mind, which disposes him II.
 to this Virtue, or from the very *Exercise* 
 of the Virtue itself.

Charity is grafted always on Good-Nature, and a Sweetness of Disposition: which though it be a Temper of Mind very lovely and desirable; yet is it such as, in the Circumstances of our present Imperfect State, hath its Inconveniences; and is what makes Conversation dangerous in a World, where we are surrounded with Temptations. It hinders us from arming our selves with that obstinate Resolution of Mind, that stubborn in complying Virtue, which is requisite to preserve a Man undefil'd and blameless. It makes us easy and yielding to Common Customs, and receiv'd Opinions; Ready to comply with a Thousand things (of which we are not exactly well satisfied) upon the pure score of good Nature, and because we cannot allow our selves to be troublesome. And being found and known to be of this Easy and Complying Temper; this very thing will

SERM. invite Ill Spirits, and Ill Men, to make
 II. their Attempts upon us.

And then the * *Exercise* of the Virtue it self, especially where the Principle of it is strong, lays us open to several Failings. It makes us omit oftentimes the Duties incumbent on us from our Professions and Callings ; and perhaps neglect to take care of Those, whom it is the First Point of Charity to take care of, our Children and Families. It warms us with such a Zeal for doing Good, as breaks out sometimes into Acts, not reconcileable to the Rules of Discretion, Decency, and Right Reason ; and which do real disservice to the Cause of God and Religion, instead of promoting it. St. *Francis's* Charity went a little too far, when it was taken up in providing for Birds, and Beasts, after a most Extraordinary and Singular manner: the Virtue was not at all beholden to him for being shew'd in

* Ἀγάπη ζῆσα (εἴτε δὲ τὸ πᾶσι αὐτῶν τῶν ἀγαθῶν)
 μᾶλλον γένοιτο αὐτῶν κακῶν, τοῖς ἐκ ὁρῶς χρησταμένοις αὐτῇ,
 Chrysost. de Sacerdot. p. 250. Ed. Cant.

such

such a Dress, as, instead of rendring it SE R M.
 desirable in the Eyes of Men, made it II.
 look ridiculous. 

Indeed Love (the Spring-Head of Charity) as it is the sweetest of All Passions, so is one of the strongest too; and, if it have the Reins but once given to it, will go near to run away with its Rider: that is, if a due Care be not taken of it, it will exalt our Fancy so high, and disorder it so much, as to put it out of the Reach and Rule of the Governing Powers of the Mind. And then, what wild Work doth there follow! Instead of Wise and Rational Ways of Beneficence, foolish Undertakings and impracticable Designs! Instead of a manly and sober Form of Devotion, all the extravagant Rants and silly Freaks of Enthusiasm! For the Proof of which I appeal to the Lives of many of those Saints to whom the Church of *Rome* hath allow'd a place in her Kalendar!

Finally, the Charitable Man, who Loves every thing, doth not fail sometimes to love his Own Virtue too; I mean, that

SER M. he is apt to over-rate the just Price of it,

II. and too much to undervalue every thing
 else in comparison of it. A Man may
 be so much struck with the Beauty and
 Excellence of Charity, as to be less con-
 cerned than he ought to be for a sound
Faith, and make Shipwreck of the One,
 whilst he is too hastily and zealously pur-
 suing the Other,

Thus, I say, the Good and Merciful
 Man, being particularly liable to some
 Infirmities, is as particularly comforted
 with a gracious Assurance of their Par-
 don.

3^{dly}, God seems on purpose to have
 plac'd this Mark of Distinction upon
 Charity, to shew us, how tender and
 careful He is of *Our* Welfare; what
 Bowels of Love and Compassion he hath
 for Us: Since That is His Favourite
 Virtue, the Virtue he chiefly delights in,
 and delights to reward; the Exercise of
 which is most sweet and comfortable,
 most useful and advantageous to the Sons
 of Men. He design'd, by This Convin-
 cing Instance of his Goodness, to prove

to us, that he was not an hard and rigorous Master, who enjoin'd us Commands, SERM.
II.
for his *Own* sake, and purely for the pleasure of being Obey'd; but that his great Intention was, to twist our Duty and our Happiness together: And therefore, the more our Ease and Advantage was concern'd in the Practice of any Virtue, the stronger Ties and Engagements to it was he resolv'd to lay upon us.

4^{thly}, Charity is particularly available to procure a Remission of the Guilt of Sin, and a Relaxation of the Punishment due to it; because it particularly engages in our behalf the Prayers of all Good Men, and of all Those Persons to whom the Instances of our Goodness extend. A Kind and Beneficent Man, as He is a Common Blessing to the World, so is He bless'd by all Mankind that know him: All are ready to Implore the Mercies of God, Spiritual and Temporal, upon the Merciful-minded; especially the Poor and Miserable, (whose Prayers God hath in a particular manner promis'd to hear) are constant and earnest Intercessors at the
Throne

SER M. Throne of Grace for him. So that, where

II.

as the Possessors of Other Virtues stand chiefly upon their Own Bottom for the obtaining Pardon and Grace, Every Man almost becomes a Supplicant for the Merciful and Liberal: and no wonder, therefore, if such United Requests prevail. But,

1stly, and principally, God hath made This Promise to *Charity*, and to no Other Virtue, because it is really the Chief and most Excellent of Virtues; and the most Excellent Thing ought to have the most Excellent Reward. It is the great Perfection, the distinguishing Grace of a Christian, preferable to Faith and Hope, in Dignity, in Use, and in the Length of its Duration, as St. *Paul* hath taught us to reason concerning it. It is call'd the *Great Commandment* *, the *End of the Commandment* †, and the *Fulfilling of the Law* ‡: and it is really what it is called. For where This Divine Grace dwells, and reigns, there no Moral Attainment of any kind can be totally wanting. Charity is

• Matth.

xxii. 38.

† 1 Tim.

i. 5.

‡ Rom.

xiii. 10.

the

the Queen of Virtues *; the Rest are of **SERM.**
 Her Retinue, and Train, as it were; con- **II.**
 stantly attending on Her, appearing, and
 disappearing with Her: and well, there-
 fore, as a Queen, is she invested by God
 with that Sovereign Prerogative, the
 Power of Covering Sin. It is Her Na-
 ture to be comprehensive of, and abound-
 ing in many Duties; and, therefore, it
 is Her Reward also, to be a Skreen for
 many Failings. Charity is said in Scrip-
 ture to establish a True Friendship, and
 to create a Real Likeness between God
 and Man: God passeth by the Faults,
 therefore, of the Charitable, as a Friend
 doth those of his Friend; the Great Re-
 semblance of the Divine Nature, which
 shines out in him, hides every Lesser Sort
 and Degree of Unlikeness, and makes it
 not to be discerned.

'Tis difficult to stop on so Fruitful a
 Subject; and yet more difficult to ex-
 press one's self becomingly and well. The
 Tongues of Men and Angels, as they are

* βασιλὶς τῶν ἀρετῶν. Chrys. T. VI. p. 193.

SER M. said to be a worthless Gift, in compari-

II. son of Charity, so are they not All able to set out Half the Worth and Excellence of it. St. *Paul* hath done somewhat towards it, in the XIIIth Chapter of the First Epistle to the *Corinthians*; and to Him I refer You.

IV. It remains, that I should make those few *Inferences* I intended from the Whole, and then point out all that hath been said particularly, upon the Occasion of this Present Assembly. And,

1st, The Truth, which hath been explain'd, suggests to us One Argument against their Opinion, who hold *Justification*, and all the Graces of the Gospel to be convey'd to us by *Faith alone*; in such a sense as excludes any manner of Regard to our *Works*. For if Justification be The putting a Man into a state of Favour with God by Remission of Sin, then Works of Charity, which contribute to the Remission of our Sins, must contribute also to our Justification. This Point goes generally for a *Speculative Nicety*,

Nicety, not worth insisting upon: But SERM.
 surely They, who think it so, have not II.
 well considered, what Influence it hath
 experimentally had upon *Practice* and a
 Good Life, in many of its Assertors.
 Some Spiritual Libertines, of the *Anti-*
nomian Way, have by it undermined the
 very Design of the Gospel; and set us
 free from the Necessity of being Pious,
 Just, or Good, upon any other Principle,
 but that of pure *Gratitude* only. And
 in Those who do not rise to these mad
 Heights, yet the Persuasions They have
 entertain'd about Justifying Faith, are
 observed mightily to lessen their Esteem
 of Good Works: and from esteeming
 them less, to come to practise them less,
 is, God knows, a very Easy step, and
 almost an unavoidable One! Witness
 the celebrated *Institutions* of a great Di-
 vine, in which *Faith* much every where,
 of *Charity* little any where is spoken; and
 we are not, therefore, to wonder, if the
 Rules of Charity should in that Book be
 as little observed. Indeed these very
 Rules of Charity, (which I would not
 willingly

SER M. willingly, while I am mentioning, transf.

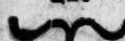
II: gress) induce me to think, That many Learned and Pious Men hold this Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, in its most rigid Sense, without holding, or even discerning the Ill Consequences that attend it. However, since the Ill Consequences of this Doctrine are sufficiently plain, both from Reason, and Experience, (tho' such Men happen not to perceive them) the same Rules of Charity forbid us, when the Subject falls in our way, to be silent concerning them, or suffer Men to think, that those, who exclude good Works from being any ways Instrumental towards Justifying a Sinner, are guilty only of an Innocent Mistake, which reacheth no farther than bare Speculation. A

2d Inference is, That, if a Spirit of Charity shall cover a multitude of Sins, then may we assure our selves, that the contrary Temper, a Spirit of Hatred, Malignity, and Ill Will, shall cover a multitude of Virtues; *i. e.* They shall not be reckon'd as Virtues to Him who possesseth

possesseth them; Neither God nor Man SERM.
 shall regard them as such, if Charity doth II.
 not Crown them. Charity covers many
 Sins, because it is so noble and so excel-
 lent a Virtue: what Virtue then, beyond
 this, can there be found, of Value suf-
 ficient to cover the Sin of Uncharita-
 bleness?

3dly, From the Promise made in the
 Text, We may take an occasion to re-
 flect on the wondrous Goodness and Con-
 descension of God. He hath a Right to
 all the highest Instances and Degrees of
 Virtue that is possible for us to abound
 in; and when we have practis'd them
 to the utmost, we have done but what
 we were strictly oblig'd to do: And yet
 so far he is pleas'd to abate of this Right,
 as to accept the Performance of One
 Great Duty in lieu of the Omission of
 many Others. An Act of Grace and
 Kindness, which is enhanc'd to Us, by
 considering, that Reason never did, or
 could make this known to the Heathen
 World; although the Gospel hath now
 reveal'd it to Us. Nay, remarkable it is,

SERM. (as I observ'd to you before) that this

II.  Great Duty, which is to compensate, as it were, for all our Failings, is the most pleasant and delightful Employment that belongs to us; the most agreeable to our Nature, and the most useful to our Fellow-Creatures. Let us not complain, therefore, of the strictness of the Rule we are to walk by, and of the Hardships, which in our Christian Warfare we are to undergo. The Rule is strict indeed; but then, as there are Great Helps and Assistances, enabling us to live up to it; so great Abatements and Allowances (we see) are made to us at last, if we do not. There are indeed Difficulties to be undergone: But, surely, the *Labour of Love* is none of them. That, as it makes a kind of Atonement to God for all the Faults we commit, so doth it make an Amends to Us for all the Troubles we are at, in every other Part of our Duty; It gives an Easiness to that Yoke, and a Lightness to that Burden which is laid upon us.

4thly,

4thly, and Lastly, If the Doctrine laid S E R M.
 down be good, then have we in it the II.
 plainest and most quickning Motive in
 the World to the Exercise of this great
 Duty of Charity; such a Motive, as ex-
 ceeds the United Force of all the Argu-
 ments which ever were offer'd in this
 Case; and of whose Power if a Man
 can be insensible, all Other Motives will
 doubtless be lost upon him. The wise
 Son of Syrach thought he had made a
 reasonable Plea for Charity, when he
 said, *Lay up Thy Treasure according to* Ecclesi.
 xxix. 11.
the Commandments of the most High, 12, 13.
and it shall bring Thee more Profit than
Gold. Shut up Alms in thy Storehouses,
and it shall deliver Thee from All Af-
liction; It shall fight for Thee against
Thine Enemies better than a mighty Shield,
or a strong Spear. But how Flat, and
Cold, and Unmoving is all this when
compared with the Life and Energy that
is in those Few Words;—It shall Cover
the multitude of Sins!

This Motive indeed hath been carry'd
 too far, and abus'd to ill Purposes by

SERM. Men of another Communion, who, by
 II. the help of it, have made the most Impure and Profligate Wretches hope for a General Forgiveness of all their Sins, so They were but Liberal enough to the Church in their Wills, and settled such a Revenue upon it, as should make a Good Number of Fathers think it worth their while to say Daily *Masses* for the Soul of the Departed. And how gross a way soever This is of Expounding the Text, it hath prov'd a very gainful one to those who made use of it; For perhaps half the Wealth of the Church of *Rome* may justly be attributed to it. A strong Persuasion of the Truth of this Exposition seems to have been one of the chief Foundation-stones, upon which a Great Part of Her Charitable Buildings have been Erected.

The Ministers of the Reform'd Church, indeed, dare not go so far in inviting you to Works of Charity and Mercy: But This they dare, and do affirm; That a true Principle of Charity, is that Qualification of Mind, which of all others

is

is most grateful and acceptable to God; SERM.
 and such as, at the Day of final Retribu- II.
 tion, He will have a particular Regard 
 to, so as to make no severe Scrutiny in-
 to that Man's Faults and Failings, who
 hath Eminently guided his Life and Prac-
 tice by it. And this they think sufficient-
 ly intimated in our Saviour's Account of
 the Process of that Day; where the On-
 ly Head of Enquiry he mentions, is
 what Good and Charitable Deeds we
 have done to any of our Poor Brethren?
 Which implies thus much at least; That
 This will be the Chief Point upon which
 we shall be examin'd; and that Our Ac-
 quittal, as to Neglects in Other Parts of
 Our Duty, will depend very much upon
 Our being able to give a good Answer
 to it.

And, I hope this Assurance itself is a
 sufficient Encouragement to the Practice
 of Charity, without Our needing to strain
 the Words of the Text to so Extravagant
 a Sense, as no Wise Man can believe that
 we *ought*, and no good Man would wish
 that we *might*, take them in.

SERM.

II.


There is indeed one farther Sense of the Words, than hath yet been mention'd; to which they may, however, be innocently and truly extended. They have been hitherto consider'd only as containing a particular Promise to Particular Persons; They may be understood also with regard to those Blessings which Publick Charities procure on Publick States and Communities. For it is true also, that Acts of Charity shall Cover the Sins of Cities and Kingdoms, as well as those of Private Men, if Cities and Kingdoms do generally agree to perform them.

Our Fore-fathers, we may presume, were of This Opinion; and were powerfully influenc'd by it, towards setting forward those Charitable Designs, which are a Lasting Honour and Advantage to this City and Kingdom. They could not but see, that the Wealth of the Church, tho' it was really grown too Great, and was by some Rich Lazy Orders in it scandalously employ'd; yet had been retrench'd,

on this Account, *beyond* what needed, and SER M.
 had not been apply'd afterwards to any II.
 Religious, or Publick Use: but was squander'd away for the most part upon Favourites, and upon such as fell in with the Honest Zeal of our first Reformers, not out of any Principle of Conscience, but the mere Design of enriching Themselves out of the Plunder of Abbies and Monasteries. The Sense of this, doubtless, affected deeply the Good and Pious Men of those Times; and made them very Earnest and Active to procure some part of these *Church Spoils* to be set aside for Charitable Uses: That Retribution, as it were, might, by this Means, be made to God, of what had been torn away in too Large Proportions from his Worship and Service: To speak plainly—— that by a true Spirit of Charity those Sins might be *Cover'd*, which a Spirit of Lust and Avarice, under the pretence of Reforming the Abuses of Charity, had *caus'd*!

And these Endeavours of theirs God bless'd so wonderfully, that some Milli-

SERM. ons of Money were, in a few Years, con-
 tributed towards erecting and endowing
 Here, and in other Parts of our Country,
 Hospitals and Houses of Charity. This
 sufficiently baffled the Calumnies, and
 stopp'd the Mouths of our Adversaries of
 the Church of *Rome*; who cried us down,
 as Men that were Reforming away Good
 Works, and turning all Religion into a
 Notional Faith. How Other Protestant
 Countries have freed Themselves from
 that Imputation, I am not able to say:
 Sure I am, Ours clear'd itself so well
 from it, as to turn the Edge of the Ob-
 jection back upon the Church of *Rome*
 itself. For, upon a Fair and Impartial
 Computation, it appears, that there were
 Greater Expences upon Publick Works
 of Charity (such, I mean, as we are at
 present discoursing of) in Sixty Years
 after the Reformation, than had been in
 Five times that Number of Years, while
 Popery stood: Some have added, —
 than there were from the *Conquest* down
 to King *Edward the Sixth*; that Good
 and Excellent Prince, the Great Promo-
 ter

ter and Encourager of these Works; and **SERM.**
 Who is not to be mention'd, without **II.**
 particular Honour, in This House, which
 acknowledges him for Her Pious and Mu-
 nificent Founder.

I cannot but observe to You, here,
 that it was the Ruling Part of This
 Great City, with a Good Bishop of *Lon-*
don, and Martyr for the Protestant Reli-
 gion, at the Head of them, that by their
 United Application stirr'd up that Young
 Prince to undertake so publick-spirited a
 Design. And it is Natural for me also at
 the same Time to wish, that That Ho-
 nourable Body may thus heartily always
 continue to join Their Endeavours and
 Interests with those of Their *Right Re-*
verend Diocesan, in promoting Publick
 Charities, and Publick Blessings of any
 kind, either in Church, or State.

Indeed, it must always be remember'd,
 to the Honour of This Great Body, That,
 as Her Foundations of Charity are lar-
 ger, for ought I can find, than those of
 any Other City in the Christian World;
 so they were All rais'd and endow'd, ei-

S E R M. ther directly by Her Own Members; or

II. if by Other Hands, yet at Her earnest and importunate Suit: So that the Fabricks, and Revenues of this Kind, that belong to Her, are not only (as in Other Parts) the Useful Ornaments of the Place, but so many standing Monuments also of the Great Piety, and Unparallel'd Bounty of Her Ancestors; who solicited the Cause of the Poor and the Infirm, the Lame and Wounded, the Vagrant and Lunatick, with such a particular Industry and Zeal, as had those Great and Blessed Effects, which we at this Day see and feel. A Zeal, never to be forgotten by Men! and which, we hope, God also will never forget! But, when he comes down to Visit this City for the many Ill Effects of Wealth misapply'd, will for the sake of it, Visit in Mercy; and consider the *Multitude of her Charities* as well as That of Her *Sins*; Graciously allowing the One to be in some Measure a *Cover* to the Other!

But I have not Room to speak severally of All the Great Benefactions with
which

which She abounds; and am call'd upon, **S E R M.**
 by the Occasion of this Present Assembly, **II.**
 to say somewhat more particularly 
 of those of This Place.

I think it, by no means, a fit and decent thing to vie Charities, and to erect the Reputation of One upon the Ruins of another: This is, for the sake of Charity to forget the True Character, and Essential Properties of it; which are, as *St. Paul* tells us, *to be kind, and not to envy, not to vaunt itself, or be puffed up, not to behave itself unseemly.* **1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.** However, This, I think, I may say, with Modesty and Truth, to the Advantage of That Charity to which we belong; That, tho' the Bottom of Wealth, it stands upon, be not so Large as that of some Others, yet is it in the Design of it so Comprehensive and Full, as not any where, I think, to be parallel'd.

Here are Supplies to Outward Want and Necessity liberally imparted; The Poor and Fatherless, not only taken Care of, but so bred up, as to be useful to the Common-wealth, and perhaps to take
 care

SER M. care of many others. Here Idle, and

II. Useless, (and therefore Necessitous) Persons are taught the Best of Lessons, Labour; inur'd to it, and made acquainted with it; and then sent out with such a Stock of Industry, as will do them more real Service than any Other kind of Benefaction, if They will but make use of it, and improve it.

Here, Loose Men and Women are reduc'd by wholesome Discipline, and Vagrants by Confinement: Punishment it self is made an Instrument of Mercy and Goodness, and, as Meat is provided for the Belly, so is there *a Rod for the Back of Fools*. These Particular Instances of Charity deserve to be enlarg'd on: It is an Argument that hath not yet been handled in its utmost Extent, and may perhaps ask Your Patience, on some Other Occasion: But the Time to which I am confin'd, is now almost run out; and there are yet Other Instances behind, to be insist'd on. For

Here, not only External Necessities are reliev'd, but Inward Wants also are supply'd;

supply'd; not Ill Manners only are out-^{SERMON}
wardly corrected, but Ill Dispositions ^{II.}
also are better'd, Ill Minds reform'd. 

And Every single Instance in this kind is not confin'd to the Person who receives the Benefit, but is a real Service to an whole Community. It puts a stop to a spreading Plague; nay, it gets Ground upon it, by making Those, who have had the Infection, turn Physicians to Others, by their Example, and Future Good Manners.

Nay, Here, Men recover their Understandings as well as their Virtues; that is, they recover their Very Selves: and are made once again Members of the Rational Creation, able to See and Know their Duty, and to Guide themselves by that Knowledge of it; to pay their *Reasonable Service* to God, and to maintain a Civil Intercourse with Men.

And on this Occasion, that *Worthy and Learned Person* deserves a particular, and Grateful mention, who hath, by his Eminent Skill, assisted the Hospital

PERMIT to be Charitable in This Way, to
 II. much greater Numbers of *Lunatics*;
 than have been known to be Cured in
 Former Times.

So that this Great Receptacle of Miserable Objects of every kind, seems to be like that Medicinal Pool at *Bethesda*, where there were Virtues proper for every Malady; all Infirmities were equally heal'd, in Those, who had the Happiness to get into it. I can carry the Parallel no farther, I thank God. — For the Prudence and Vigilance of its Governors, as it hitherto *hath*, so, I question not, always *will* take Care, that (Contrary to what happen'd to the Impotent Man in that Story) They who have most need of the Pool, shall ever have the Happiness to get first into it. Impartiality is the Soul of Mercy, as well as Justice; and adds Farther Degrees of Use and Beauty to the most Useful and Beautiful Thing in the World.

To give You, therefore, in little, the true Character of this Great Benefaction; As Charity comprizeth almost all
 Kinds

Kinds of Virtues; so doth This Foundation take in almost all Sorts of Charities! SERM.
II.

But though all the Chief Kinds of Beneficence are here pursu'd, yet many Miserable Objects in Each Kind are not possible to be reach'd; with the present Stock of Charity, which belongs either to this Hospital, or to all Her Other Rivals in This *Labour of Love*. God open the Hands of the Rich, and direct the Hearts of the Merciful, to build upon the Foundation Their Forefathers have laid; and to supply what is wanting, to complete Their Designs! Approving Themselves thus, the true Heirs of Their Piety and Bounty, as well as of their Wealth! Else these Great Buildings and Endowments of a former Age, like the Virtuous Acts and Atchievements of the first Founders of Noble Families, will become a Reproach, rather than be an Honour, to a Degenerate and Worthless Posterity.

Consider with Your Selves, how God hath blest this City for the sake of the mighty

SER M. mighty Works that have been done in

II. Her; I say, for the *sake* of them.—For

let a Man carry his Thoughts back to that Time, when these Good Designs were first set on foot, and he shall find, that from thence the Rise and Growth of this City in Trade, Wealth, Interest, and Greatness, is precisely to be dated.

May it grow on, in the same Proportion! and by the same Means also! That is, may there still be found such a Number of Charitable Persons in it, as will continue the Character which hath hitherto belong'd to it; and by That means, secure the Continuation of God's Blessings upon it. May Charity go on *to have its perfect Work*; not Living merely upon the Old Stock, not continuing at a stay; but Growing and Increasing still, as the Necessities of Some Men increase, and the Abilities of Others to Relieve them! And thus spreading itself to a wider Compass, it shall assuredly procure a Greater Share of God's Mercies, and *Cover a greater Multitude of our Sins.*

That

That This may be the Case, the Good and **SER M.**
 Merciful God grant, through the Great **II.**
 Steward and Dispenser of his Mercies,
 Christ the Righteous! To whom, with
 the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be
 ascrib'd, as is most due, all Honour,
 Adoration, and Praise, Now, and
 Ever! Amen!

QUEEN

AT

WHITE-HALL

A Little one shall become a Thousand, and
 a Small one a Strong Nation: In the
 Lord, shall suffice us, in this Time.

The **SER M.** **III.**
 The Evangelic Prophet is very par
 ticular, throughout this Chapter,
 in describing the Kingdom which is
 of God, and in setting forth the
 signs

The Miraculous Propagation of the Gospel.

SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN

AT

WHITE-HALL,

October 21, 1694.

ISAIAH lx. 22.

*A Little one shall become a Thousand, and
a Small one a strong Nation: I, the
Lord, will hasten it, in His Time.*

SERM.

III.

THE Evangelic Prophet is very particular, throughout this Chapter, in describing the *sudden and mighty increase of Christianity, its triumphant progress*

I

gress thro' all Nations, and its prevalences E R M.
over all the other Religions of the World. III.

And this wondrous Enlargement of it he takes occasion (at the close of the Chapter) to represent as so much the more Admirable, on the account of that Small Appearance it should make at first, those Slender and Unpromising Beginnings, with which it should set out. *A little one*, says he, in the Words I have read to you, *shall become a Thousand; and a Small one a strong Nation: I, the Lord, will hasten it, in His* (i. e. in the Messiah's) *time*. From which Words, therefore, I shall without farther Preface, take occasion to raise these several Heads of Discourse.

First, I shall briefly represent to You the *matter of Fact* it self, to which this Prophecy refers, how *swift* and *strange* a *Progress* the Gospel made at, and after its first setting out from *Jerusalem*.

Secondly, I shall prove to you, that this *Success* of it *must* have been *Miraculous*,

VOL. I.

G

and

I.

II.

The Miraculous Propagation

SERM. and owing chiefly to the mighty Operations, and effectual Assistances of the Holy Spirit of God. After establishing which great Truth upon firm and proper Arguments, I shall, in the

III. *Third* place, fairly lay together what can be offer'd to evade the force of them; and give the several *Objections* their *Answers*.

IV. *Fourthly*, I shall consider, How Great and how Distinguishing an *Advantage* this was to the *Christian Institution*, and to what *Useful Ends* and *Purposes* the Consideration of it may be apply'd.

V. *Fifthly*, and *Lastly*, I shall enquire into the time *when*, and the manner *how*, this *Miracle* *ceas'd*; and make some suitable Reflections upon it, with regard, both to Those who liv'd Then, when this Stop was put to the Gospel, and to Us, who live Now, in the latter Ages of the World.

First,

First, I am to represent to You the **SERM.**
Matter of Fact itself, to which the **Pro-** **III.**
phesy of the Text refers, how *swift* and
strange a *Progress* the *Gospel* really made
 at, and after its first setting out from
Jerusalem. And the account of this is
 as much above *Imagination*, as it is be-
 yond *Dispute*.

From *St. Luke* we learn, that, upon the
Ascent of Our Saviour, the *little Flock*,
 He had gather'd, consisted of but *One hun-*
drd and twenty Disciples: These receiv'd
 a mighty addition to their number, on
 the very day of *Pentecost* (the day, on
 which the *Gospel*, as well as the *Law*,
 was first promulg'd) even on That day
Three Thousand Souls were brought over
 to the Faith, by a Sermon of *St. Peter's*:
 so well did that Spiritual Fisher begin to
 make good the Character, which Christ
 had given of him, that *he should catch Men!*
 After this, *the number of the Disciples mul-* Acts vi. 7.
tiplied in Jerusalem greatly, saith the same
 holy Pen, (greatly, even in proportion to
 G 2 their

SERM. their first increase :) and from thence the

III. Doctrine was soon carried into all the Remoter Regions of the Earth ; insomuch that the Book of the *Apostles Acts* (which being written by St. *Luke*, the Companion of St. *Paul*, is chiefly taken up in giving an Account of that particular Apostle's Labours, and Travels ; and of those of them only, which he underwent in the First Years of his Ministry : I say, even this Book it self) doth contain an account of the spreading of the Gospel, forwards, thro' many Eastern Countries ; and, backwards, through a great part of the West : of its piercing, on the one side, into all the Civiliz'd, and some of the Barbarous Provinces of *Asia* ; and, on the other, as far as the great Metropolis of *Europe*, *Rome* it self ; so mightily grew the Word of God, and prevail'd !

Acts xix.
20.

Indeed, the Writers of the Story of the Church do with one consent agree, that *Scythia*, *India*, *Gaul*, and *Egypt*, all the most distant parts of the World Then known, had the Doctrine of Christ convey'd to them in less than forty Years,

i. e.

i.e. before the Destruction of the Jewish State by Titus. SERMON III.

And what degree of Success the Voice of these Preachers had in the several Countries, thro' which it sounded, we may learn from the Ancient Apologists, who, e'er Two Centuries were as yet run out, pleaded for Christianity, on the account of its vast and incredible numbers; represented to the Heathen Emperors, that their Courts, their Camps, their Cities, their Provinces, were all full of them, and that it was impossible to extirpate them, without destroying the far Greater part of their Subjects.

The Gospel is frequently in the New Testament compared to *Light*; and it did in nothing more resemble Light than in This, that, as soon as the Heavenly Doctrine, therein contain'd, arose upon the World, it darted its Bright Rays, and diffus'd its quickning Influence from East to West, with an inconceivable Swiftness. This *Kingdom of God came not with Observation, neither could Men say, Lo Here, and Lo There!* That is, (as we

Luk. xvii.
20, 21.

SEEM may interpret the Words) it did not

III. establish it self like other Kingdoms, in
 a slow and leisurely manner, so as that
 Lookers-on might trace it easily from
 its Rise through the several Steps of its
 Progress; but fix'd it self at once almost
 every where, with so rapid and amazing
 a Course, as did, as it were, leave the
 Eyes and Observation of Men behind it.
 And still, as it went along, it gain'd
 mighty Spoils from all Religions, and
 gather'd vast multitudes of every Coun-
 try under its Banners. And, therefore,
 well did the Founder of this Kingdom

Luke xiii. thus prophesy concerning it: — Unto
 18, 19, 20, what is the Kingdom of God like? And
 21. whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like

a Grain of Mustard-Seed, which a Man
 took, and threw into his Garden; and it
 grew, and waxed a great Tree: and the
 Fowls of the Air lodged in the Branches
 of it. And, again he said, Whereunto
 shall I liken the Kingdom of God? It is
 like Leaven, which a Woman took, and
 hid in three measures of meal, until the
 Whole was leavened.

But

But because the matter of Fact it self, SERM.
[That there was such a sudden and prodigious increase of Converts to Christianity] is on all Hands so well agreed upon, as to need no solemn Proof: it may suffice to have given this short Account of it. III.

I go on now, in the *Second Place*, to prove, that this Success of the Gospel was certainly *miraculous*, and owing chiefly to the mighty Operations, and effectual Assistances of the Holy Spirit of God: and that, for this plain Reason; because the *Natural* and Visible Causes, which concurr'd to the production of this great Effect, were not any ways Equal to the Effect produc'd; and, therefore, some *Supernatural* and invisible Cause must needs have given birth to it. II.

The *Appearing* Causes and Instruments of this Wondrous Revolution were, chiefly, Twelve Men, of obscure Birth and Parentage, of the meanest Education, of the plainest and simplest Understandings, unpolish'd by Learning and Eloquence,

SER. M. unimprov'd by Experience and Converse ;

III.

Men of no Subtlety, no Art, no Address ;
 who had no manner of Authority, Interest, or Repute in the World. These Men undertake to convince the World, that one *Jesus*, a Man, who had just before expir'd publickly on a Cross, was the true God, blessed for ever ; and, in consequence of this, to preach up a Doctrine, the most unwelcome to Flesh and Blood that could be, the most repugnant to Men's natural Desires and Inclinations ; to their settled Habits, and inveterate Prejudices ; contrary to the Establish'd Rites and Religions of all Countries, and in all Ages of the World. They set out from *Jerusalem*, with this Design ; they disperse themselves thro' all the quarters of the Earth, they succeed every where : and, in a very short time, prevail with great Multitudes, in every Nation, and Kingdom, to submit to the Laws, and to own the Religion of *Jesus*.

Now, I say, here was no manner of Proportion between the Cause, and its Effect ;
 between

between the Work which was wrought, SERM.
and the Instruments which wrought it: III.
and therefore we may, and must from
hence conclude, that a Divine Invisible
Power went along with them in every
Step, and *miraculously* blest'd their Endeavours. Which Truth that it may appear
to you in its full Strength and Evidence,
I shall consider more particularly, which
(naturally speaking) are the best Advan-
tages for a New Opinion to set up with,
and under what Circumstances it is most
likely to prevail; and I shall shew, that
the Christian Religion was utterly desti-
tute of Every One of these Advantages,
and yet, nevertheless, *did* prevail.

Now there are *Four* Things, that
chiefly conduce towards the spreading of
any new Doctrine, and most remark-
ably make way for its reception in the
World.

As, 1st, If the *Principles* of it be suited
to the *Lusts*, the *Interests*, and *Wishes*
of Those, among whom it is to be pro-
pagated.

2^{dly},

SERM. 2dly, If it be *supported* and *countenan-*
 III. *ced* by Persons in Power and *Authority*,
 of great *Name* and *Note*, if it be either
 forcibly obtruded upon Men by Sanguinary Laws and Edicts, or more indirectly advanced by Art, and Management, and the Methods of worldly Prudence.

3dly, If it be first brought into the World in *dark* and *barbarous* Ages, when Men are either too Rude and Illiterate, to be Able to weigh, and dispute the Truth of it, or too much sunk in Sloth and Vice, to be Willing to do it. Or,

4thly, If it be not proposed to Men, all at once, but be insinuated into them by *Degrees*, Secretly, and Insensibly.

I. As to the *First* of these, it is certain, that nothing recommends a new Doctrine so much, or goes so far towards promoting an Universal Reception of it, as its falling in with the corrupt Desires and Inclinations, the Passions and Prejudices of Men. For Men are, without difficulty, brought to believe an Opinion true, which they wish true beforehand. And This was the Way in which that
 cunning

cunning Impostor, *Mahomet*, set up for a new Prophet. He made his Doctrine as relishing and palatable as he could; contriv'd it, on purpose, so as that it might gratify Mens Lusts and Appetites; and, especially, that it might comply with the loose and wanton Manners of the *East*, where he erected his Standard.

And thus also, ever since, hath Libertinism of all kinds promoted its Interest, and increas'd its Party. False and foolish Opinions have gotten footing, and thriven, in prejudice to true Religion, and sound Morality; because there was something in them, which flatter'd either our Vanity, our Lust, or our Pride, and fell in with a darling Inclination. And to this single Art Mr. *Hobbs* ow'd all his Reputation, and his Followers: it was not his Philosophy, and his boasted Reason, that drew Men in; but the skill he had in fitting his Principles to Mens Constitutions, and Tempers: He knew what would take, and be lik'd; and he knew how to express it after a taking manner; and no wonder

SER M. wonder then, if it were greedily entertain'd. To talk against receiv'd Opinions, and in behalf of some belov'd Vices, and Frailties; to dress up his Discourse in all the natural Beauties of Language, and to give it beside the Air (and he gave it nothing but the Air) of Demonstration; This, he saw, would be a sure way of engaging the Men of Wit and Pleasure on his side; and This, therefore, he follow'd, with application and success; like
 Luke xvi. 8. *one of the Children of This World, who are, in their Generation, wiser than the Children of Light.*

But Christianity, when it set out, took none of these methods of recommending it self, and enlarging its Interests: on the contrary, it propos'd plain, naked Truths, without Colours, and Disguises, or any regard to what was Agreeable and Pleasing. It held forth high and inconceivable Mysteries, which the Pride of Man would make him apt to suspect, because he could not perfectly comprehend; and it preach'd up harsh and ungrateful Doctrines, which did Violence

lence to Men's Natures, and which it was SERM.
 death to them to think of entertaining. III.

And yet, I say, under this great Disadvantage it made its way, and prosper'd.
 But,

2dly, It is another great Advantage to a rising Opinion, if it be espous'd by Men of Authority, Repute and Parts; who may either force its way into the World by dint of Power, or bring it about by Arts of Management, and Contrivance. In this manner the Prophet of the East hew'd out his way by the Power of the Sword; took advantage from the Divisions and Weakness of Christendom, to arm a Savage Multitude, and make large inroads upon it; and, having first brought into subjection the Bodies of Men, had no hard Task, afterwards, to enslave their Souls.

In like manner the Papal Usurpations often prevail'd; the Bishops of *Rome* got Zealous Princes into their Interest, and made them blindly obedient to the Holy See; and then, by Their help, impos'd their own Decrees upon whole unwilling Provinces

SERMON. Provinces and Kingdoms. And, as some

III. of their Encroachments thus got footing, so many others, we know, were brought in, at first, and have been supported ever since, by the highest and most refined Arts of Policy. That See hath never wanted, from the very Moment since it first set up its Pretences, a number of skilful Managers, who have continually pleaded its Cause, and carried on its Interests, with all the Dexterity and Address, with all the Industry and Zeal, of which Human Wit is capable: It hath ever had the warmest and ablest, (I had almost said the wisest) Heads employ'd in its Defence; and hath taken care to make sure of them, by Bountiful Rewards, dealt out in proportion to their Services; and by making a Zeal for the Papal Chair, a sure and never-failing step towards all manner of Honours and Advantages: and no wonder, therefore, if its Delusions have spread so far, and wide, and infected such Numbers.

It was much the same case, with regard to the broachers of Heresy in the ancient

cient Church ; they were generally lead-
 ing Men, of some Figure and Repute in
 the World, of great Wit and Subtlety ;
 and, by the Help of these, they were able
 to raise a Dust, and make a Noise, to
 form a Party, and set themselves at the
 Head of it.

But now, when Christianity first ap-
 pear'd, how weak and defenceless was it,
 how artless and undesigning ! How ut-
 terly unsupported either by the Secular
 Arm, or Secular Wisdom ! *I send you* Matth. x. 7
forth, said our Saviour to his Apostles, *as* ^{16.}
Sheep in the midst of Wolves : And, ac-
 cordingly, they went forth, in the spirit
 of Simplicity, of Humility, and Meek-
 ness ; arm'd only with Truth, and In-
 nocence ; a good Cause, and an equal
 Resolution : *The Weapons of their War-* 2 Cor. x. 4.
fare were not Carnal, but Spiritual ! The
 Messengers of these glad Tidings were so
 far from having a Name in the World,
 that they were contemptible : were scorn-
 ed as *Jews*, by the rest of Mankind ;
 and as the meanest and lowest of *Jews*,
 by the *Jews* themselves ; and were not
 likely

SERM. likely, therefore, to credit the high Em-
 III. bassy, on which they came. They left
 ~~~~~ their Nets, and their Hooks, (the Only  
 things, probably, that they understood)  
 to come into a New World, wherefn  
 they were perfect Strangers, and to preach  
 a New Gospel, with which all Men were  
 unacquainted : and they preached it, not  
 to the *Wise*, the *Mighty*, or the *Noble*,  
 who, when converted, might have for-  
 forwarded its Reception by their Influence ;  
 but to the *Foolish*, *Weak*, and *Base*, who  
 were able to do nothing for its Advan-  
 tage, but by Living according to the  
 Rules, and Dying for the Truth of it.  
 As they had no Help from the Powers of  
 this World, Civil or Military, so had  
 they all the Opposition that was possible ;  
 which they withstood, and baffled : they  
 sow'd the good Seed of the Word under  
 the very Feet of the *Roman* Magistrates,  
 and Soldiers, who, though they trod it  
 down, and rooted it up, yet could not  
 destroy it so far, but that still it sprang  
 out again, and yielded a fruitful and glo-  
 rious Harvest. A



3<sup>d</sup> Thing, that promotes the Progress SERM.  
of a New Religion, is, if it be brought III.  
into the World, in Dark and Barbarous  
Times; when Men are either too Rude  
and Illiterate, to be able to weigh, and  
to dispute the Truth of it, or too much  
sunk in Sloth and Vice, to be Willing  
to do it. And this, again, cannot but  
put us in mind of the *Romish* Supersti-  
tions: for it is plain, that they took That  
time of settling and spreading their Em-  
pire, which, of all times since the coming  
of Christ, was the most Ignorant, and  
the least Inquisitive; when Men were  
Vicious, Lazy, Dispirited, Fearful, and  
Credulous; when gross Darkness sat up-  
on the Face of the West; when the Ir-  
ruptions of the *Goths* and *Vandals* had  
destroy'd all the Old Learning, as well  
as the Old Buildings, and left nothing  
but Ignorance and Barbarity behind them.  
Then, in that *Night*, as the Parable  
speaks, did the cunning *Enemy* come,  
and *sow his Tares*, when there was no  
body at Work, or awake to observe him.  
And, when he had thus covertly sown  
VOL. I. H them,

SERM. them, what Wonder was it, that they  
 III. should grow up together with the Corn,  
 ~~~~~ and Flourish?

But did the Gospel make such Advantages as these of Men's Credulity, and Supineness? No, it took all ways of being Try'd and Examin'd to the uttermost. It alarm'd the World a good while before-hand, and gave fair Warning of its approach, by plain Signs, and Predictions: and if the Prophecies of the Old Testament will not be admitted as Proofs in this case, sure *Tacitus* and *Virgil* may be heard; the First of which lays it down as a known Truth, that there was (about the Time of our Saviour) a strong Tradition, thro' all the *East*, of a certain mighty Prince, that was then, and there expected to arise, and to govern the World; and the Latter, out of the *Sibylline* Verses, transcrib'd such an Account of things, as did evidently, and could only belong to the Days of the Gospel, and the Reign of the Messiah.

But the most Observable thing on this Head, is, that God pitch'd upon that
 parti-

particular Point of Time, for the manifestation of his Gospel, when good Sense, and Learning, and Wit, were at the highest; when the *Roman* Empire was in its full Glory, and, together with it, all the Arts and Sciences flourish'd: when the World enjoy'd a profound Peace, and was at Liberty to examine the Truth of an Opinion, which set up with such pretences. Then did the Glorious Light of the Gospel shine forth, and dazzle the Eyes even of Those, who were thought to see best, and farthest. And soon afterwards the Apostles open'd their Heavenly Commission, and executed it publicly; challenging those who look'd on, with all their Curiosity, Subtlety, and Spite, to disprove, or blemish it. The Doctrine of the Cross shew'd it self barefac'd to all the Wits and Sages of both *Rome* and *Athens*; and defy'd their Doubts, and their Reasonings. And yet, under These discouraging Circumstances also, it took root downwards, and brought forth fruit upwards, speedily, and abundantly. A

SERM.

III.

4th Help towards establishing any New Opinions in Religion is, if they be not propos'd to Men all at Once, but insinuated into them only by insensible Steps and Degrees: and this method hath often made way for the belief of the most monstrous Doctrines, and the entertainment of the wildest Absurdities. Witness [once more] several Articles in the *Roman Catholick* Faith; which, had they been offer'd to the Minds of Men, at first, in their full Latitude, had been rejected with Indignation and Horror; but being propos'd at half Views, and advanc'd by little and little, were also gradually admitted by Men, not well aware of their Utmost Import and Tendency: every first step into Error smoothing the way towards a second, and so on, till the Passage was widen'd enough for the Grossiest Contradictions to enter in at it.

Far from this Artificial Method of winning Belief, was the Religion of *Jesus*: Upon its first Appearance, after the Descent of the Holy Ghost, it offer'd it self to the View of Men, at full length, and

and in all its Proportions. No Moral SERM. Precept was reserv'd for a more Convenient Time, no Doctrine (no Great, Fundamental Doctrine) was disguis'd, or conceal'd. The Message it brought, it deliver'd, plainly and openly, at once; the most unwelcome Practical Truths, as well as Those, which were better Known, and receiv'd; the Sublimest Points of Faith, together with such as were more Easy and Credible. III.

The Primitive Apostles did not, like those of a Later date, the Fathers of the Mission of *China*, preach up first a *Glorify'd*, and then a *Crucify'd* Saviour; but bore the Scandal of the Cross wheresoever, and to whomsoever they open'd the Doctrines of it: The *slaying* of *Jesus*, and his being *hang'd on a Tree*, is Acts v. 30. mention'd in one of the first Sermons of *St. Peter*. This (humanly speaking) was an Unlikely way of gaining Profelytes; and yet, as unlikely a Way as it was, Thus were innumerable Profelytes gain'd.

Let us lay together what hath been said: — The Gospel of Christ, at its

SER M. Earliest appearance, had all the Probabi-

III.  lities in the World against its Success: for it was possess'd scarce of any One of those Advantages, which do most signally recommend a new Doctrine, and make it thrive. It had no complying Tenets, to sooth Mens Appetites and Passions! but was all Harsh and Austere. It had no Encouragement, no Protection from the Civil Power; no Force, or Cunning to uphold it; no Men of Eminence, and Esteem to engage on its side. The Age, which was pitch'd upon for the discovery of it, was more discerning and enlightned, more curious and inquisitive, than, perhaps, any that either preceded or followed it: and therefore the Success of this Doctrine could not be owing to Mens Ignorance or Supineness. Finally, its Promulgers deliver'd it not out by Parcels, as is the way of Cunning and Designing Men; but offer'd the Whole of it to be all together examined, and compared. Nevertheless, though press'd with All These Clogs and Incumbrances, it sprang forth, and made its way into the

the World, by a swift and incredible SERM.
Progress. III.

The Inference from hence is plain and indubitable; That a Divine Power and Virtue certainly went along with it, to supply what was Wanting to it, upon Other accounts; and that its *Increase* must needs have been *Supernatural*, and *Miraculous*: so that, were we acquainted with nothing more, concerning the Apostles, than what the Four Evangelists have left us; were the Book of their *Acts* lost, and, together with it, an account of the wondrous Effusion of the Holy Spirit upon them, at the Day of Pentecost; and of the mighty Signs and Wonders, which they afterwards perform'd, in Virtue of that Unction: I say, were we in the Dark to all these Transactions, which declare the Christian Religion to have been *propagated* by *Miracle*; yet still every Considering Man must think that there was somewhat *Miraculous* in it. Such an Increase, from such beginnings; such a wonderful Revolution, brought about

The Miraculous Propagation

S.E.R.M. by such weak and disproportion'd Instruments; is it self a *Miracle*, and the greatest of Miracles; and doth as evidently assure us, that the Preaching of the Apostles was in the *Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power*, as if we had heard them speaking Strange Tongues, seen them healing the Blind and Lame, and reviving the Dead,

1 Cor. ii.
4.

III. In which Truth that we may be yet farther confirm'd, let us consider (as I propos'd) in the *Third* place, what *Shifts* the Enemies of the Gospel make use of, to evade the Force of this pressing Argument. And the utmost that any of them pretend to say, is, as follows. 'Tis true, they will own, Christians multiply'd very fast, and the Increase of them was, in some sense, *Miraculous*: That is, it was *wonderful*; as every Unusual Thing is to Those, who do not know, or consider the Causes of it. But to a Man, they say, who dares to go out of the Common Road, and to think for himself, it will appear, that there was at that time a Set
of

of *Natural* Causes on foot, sufficient SERM.
to account for this Effect, without any III.
recourse to a *Divine* and *Supernatural*

Agent. The Apostles indeed were twelve plain Illiterate Men, who had not, of Themselves, force, or skill enough, to bring about such an Event: but their Natural Inability was supply'd by a favourable Juncture, by an happy Coincidence of such conspiring Causes, and Accidental Advantages, as mightily help'd on the Work. For Example,

The *Sufferings* of those poor bigotted Creatures, the *Martyrs*, made mighty Impressions upon Men; especially upon those of the same Rank with the Sufferers, the Common people; who never fail to take the side of the Oppress'd, and to think That Cause good (let it be what it will) for the Profession of which Men are us'd ill. Then, the *Purity of the Christian Morals* was a mighty Argument to bring the Men of Probity and Virtue into the Interests of the Gospel. And so likewise was the *Analogy* of some of its *Mystical Truths*, to the *Doctrines of Plato*,
(then

SER M. (then in great esteem and vogue) a very
 III. good Bait to the Men of Philosophy, and
 Learning. The *Distribution* of Goods,
 which the first Christians made, and their
 Living together in Common, was a good
 Reason for many Mens embracing that
 Faith, which, they were sure, would
 maintain them. The *Casual Cessation*
 of *Oracles* was immediately turn'd to the
 Advantage of the Religion of *Christ*, as if
That had procur'd it. And the *Destruc-*
tion of the *Jewish State* contributed great-
 ly to the Increase of the Christian Num-
 bers; because it seem'd to have been fore-
 told by the Founder of their Faith: and
 therefore, luckily coming to pass about
 that time, rais'd an high Opinion in
 Men of his Person, and Doctrine; and
 inclin'd them to think, that his Institu-
 tion, then newly set up, was design'd
 by God to succeed in the Room of the
Jewish Establishment, which, about the
 same time, hapn'd to be pull'd down. In
 the mean while, the *Rulers* of the World
 overlook'd, and neglected to crush, a Doc-
 trine, which was so harmless in it self,
 and

and so unlikely to succeed, on the ac-SERM?
count of its Abettors; till, thro' Their III.
Connivance, it was at last Universally
receiv'd among the Vulgar sort, and the
Number of its Notaries was grown so
formidable, that even Princes themselves
were forc'd, for their Own Ease and In-
terest, to come into it, and profess it.

And thus, say they, several extraor-
dinary and unheeded Advantages con-
curring to favour the Growth of Chris-
tianity, it grew indeed mightily, and pre-
vail'd; as a little River will swell high,
and spread it self wide, and run far, when
swoln by Casual Rains, and by many
other Streams, which have emptied them-
selves at once into it. Such is the Ac-
count they pretend to give of the Rise
and Progress of our Faith, from *second*
Causes, without calling a *first*, to solve
the Appearance.

In opposition to these Pretences, I will
shew, that the Causes here assign'd were
utterly insufficient to produce the Event,
for which they are assign'd: a short Re-
view of them, I think, (and the time
will

SER. M. will allow of but a short one) will easily

III. satisfy us concerning it.



The *Blood of the Martyrs* was, indeed, what it hath been often styl'd, the *Seed of the Church*: but how? Not, certainly, by alluring Men to the Profession of Christianity, at the Time *when* those Martyrs suffer'd; for nothing could have a greater tendency to frighten and discourage Men from professing the Gospel, than to find, that they should be persecuted, and must die for it. This only is meant by that Saying, and thus far it holds good; That the Sufferings and Torments, which the first Christians underwent so willingly and bravely, were a strong Evidence of the Truth of that Doctrine, which could inspire its Followers with so much Courage, Constancy, and Patience, and dispos'd Men mightily to embrace the Religion of Christ *afterwards*, in better and more quiet Times. But before that this Motive could have any considerable Force and Influence, the Gospel had *already* spread and settled it self every where:

and

and therefore nothing can well be ac-
counted for by it, but the Accession
which was made to Christianity, after it
was sufficiently establish'd; and This, we
are ready to confess, had nothing Extra-
ordinary in it, nor are we at present ma-
king any Enquiries concerning it.

The same Answer serves to disprove
that Other pretended account of this In-
crease, drawn from the *Destruction of the
Jewish State*. We allow it to have ad-
ded to the Numbers of Christian Con-
verts, when it hapned: but it hapned not
till near forty Years after the Death of
Christ; and by that time, Christianity
was strong enough of it self, and needed
no Aids. And, even when this Event
hapned, tho' several *Jews* promoted the
Interests of the Gospel, by embracing
the Faith, yet the Obstinate Part of
them, which stood out, did it much more
harm than the Profelytes did it good.
For the uncomplying *Jews* were not sa-
tisfy'd with * rejecting Christianity them-

* See the Passage in Philo Judæus, about the Embassy sent
from the *Jews* to their Brethren in all Parts of the World,
exhorting them to resist the Progress of Christianity.

selves;

S E R M. selves : but made it their business to render it odious, suspected, and contemptible to the Heathens also, in all the Corners of the *Earth*, to which they were driven.

The *Purity of the Christian Morals*, and the answerable Lives of Christian Converts, did indeed very naturally lead Men to admire and value the Doctrine of Christ; but, by no means, to come under the Yoke of it : for tho' Most Men have an Esteem for strict Rules, and strict Liv'ers; yet Few care to practise the one, or to imitate the other. And nothing, I think, could be contriv'd so effectual, (next to the former wise Motive from the Sufferings of the Martyrs) to *deter* Men from Christianity, as to tell them, that, when they took it upon them, they must renounce their dearest Appetites, and Passions, and deny their very Selves. And I desire the Men, who raise these Objections against the Divine Original of the Gospel, to tell us fairly, whether, if they had liv'd at that time, they would have come in upon *This Principle*.

ciple. I am sure, they would not; because SERM.
 it is *This* Principle alone, [that they must III.
 part with their unlawful Satisfaction, and 
 Pleasures, if they do] which keeps them
 out of it now. Therefore, neither can
 This be any Sufficient Reason for the sud-
 den and wide Growth of Christianity.

The *Analogy of some mystical Truths*
in the Gospel to the Doctrine of Plato,
 is yet a weaker Plea. For this Motive is
 calculated to touch but very few, only
 the Philosophers of the *Academic School*.
 And with such, it could have no Great
 weight, surely; or, at least, not enough
 to over-balance that Scorn and Con-
 tempt, with which, on other accounts,
 they treated the Christian Religion, and
 its Promulgers; That, for its short, Un-
 philosophical way of proposing Truths,
 without Demonstration, or Reasoning;
 and Those, for their Ignorance, and the
 Meanness of their Education. Accord-
 ingly, we find not that the Sublime My-
 steries of our Faith made any Impression
 on these haughty Reasoners: St. Paul
 was derided at *Athens*, when he propos'd
 them;

SERM. them; nor can we certainly learn that /

III. any one Philosopher, of Note, embrac'd
our Religion, till it had been for many
Years preached, and disseminated, and
had taken deep root in the World.

The *Casual Cessation of Oracles* (as 'tis
call'd) about the Time of Promulging
the Gospel, was not Casual, but the di-
rect and genuine Effect of it: and, we
own, had Men understood it to be so
Then, and imputed the Total Silence of
those Oracles to its True Cause, such a
Persuasion would have been very useful
towards bringing in the Heathen World
to the acknowledgment of Christ. But
we deny that they did at all understand,
or allow it to be so. And for a plain
Proof of this, we refer our selves to that
Celebrated Discourse in *Plutarch*, about
the Reasons of this Cessation; where, a-
mong Many, which that Learn'd Man
assigns for it, (vain Reasons indeed, and
such as shew him to have been at a Loss
for the True One!) This of the Com-
ing of Christ is not mention'd, or hint-
ed at: tho' he gives there such an account
of

of things, that a Christian might easily prove, from what *He* relates, that it was really the Coming of Christ which effected it. But this is a Point of too important and nice a nature to be settled incidentally, and might well deserve to be consider'd in an entire Discourse.

Again, neither can any probable account be given of this matter, from the *Charitable Distribution of their Goods, which the first Christians made*. For, supposing that some of the poorer sort might be tempted by this Motive; yet, surely, those who had wherewithal to sustain themselves, and were easy in their Circumstances, did not come in upon it. It will not be said, I hope, that such as made this Distribution of their Goods (which will be found to have been no inconsiderable Number) came in themselves to partake of it. Nor could these Hopes have any Great Influence, even on the Meaner sort; since there was something in the Christian Religion, of far more force to frighten them, than This was to allure them; the strict Rules

SERM. of Honesty and Temperance, according
 III. to which they were bound to live, and
 the great Calamities and Persecutions,
 which they were sure to undergo.

Lustly, no weight can be laid, in this case, on that *Contempt*, which *Heathen Princes* are said to have had of the *Christian Religion*, and the little Care they, therefore, took to restrain it: for it is not true, that they stood by unconcerned at its Growth; on the contrary, it is certain, that they look'd upon it with a jealous Eye, from its first Rise; and the Early Persecutions of *Nero* (not to mention those of *Domitian*, which were after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*) shew that he took great notice of it, and endeavour'd to Extirpate it. However, let the *Roman Emperors* have been never so regardless of its Increase; yet it is certain that they did no ways Countenance it; and that every one, who turn'd Christian, was sure by that means to forfeit the Favour of his Prince, and to be look'd upon as an Apostate from the Religion

Religion of his Country. And how, SERM.
 even under such a Pressure as this, could III.
 Christianity have made so Rapid and
 Astonishing a Progress, if He, who is
 mightier than the mightiest, had not
 bid it *go forth and prosper* against all Hu-
 man Discouragements? Had *this Coun-*
sel, or this Work been of Men, it would,
 even without any direct Opposition from
 the Temporal Power, have certainly *come*
to nought, as Gamaliel argu'd; but *being*
of God, nothing could overthrow it.

I do not deny, after all, but that
 Every one of these Particulars might,
 in a natural way, contribute somewhat,
 either to the Planting, or Spreading of
 the Gospel. But I think it is evident,
 from the short Hints I have suggested to
 you, that All them together were not
 able to do the thousandth part of that
 Work which is allotted to them. And,
 therefore, to resolve this Great Event
 into a *Conspiracy of second Causes*, as 'tis
 call'd, without any regard to the *first*, is
 an absurd and senseless Attempt; and
 only shews us, how very strong an In-

SERM. cination and Bias there is in Some
 III. Minds towards Infidelity; which they
 can be brought to espouse upon so very
 slight Grounds.

A Man, who should see an Acorn put into the Earth, and perceive in a few Weeks, or Months, an Oak shooting up from it, to a prodigious height, and spreading its Branches to an amazing extent, so as to over-top the loftiest Mountains, and even to cover the whole Field where it grew; might as well say, that there was a strange *Conspiracy of Natural Causes*, an extraordinary degree of Warmth, Moisture, and so forth, which concurr'd to produce this Effect; as affirm, that the vast Success of the Gospel was owing to those *petty Principles*, from whence Some Men pretend to derive it.

But it must be granted to them, that their Thoughts are of a piece, and that this Opinion of theirs falls in with the rest of their System. For their Account of the *New Creation* by Jesus Christ, is much like that which they give of the
 Old

Old one. It was a Lucky Hit of concur-
ring Causes which propagated Christiani-
ty. And it was a Lucky Hit also of
dancing Atoms, which first made the
World: and 'tis the same Lucky Hit,
which still preserves and governs it too.
They, who can bring themselves to be-
lieve the Latter of these Opinions, may,
consistently enough, be suppos'd to en-
tertain the Former. But, certainly, no
other Creature, but an Atheist by Com-
plexion, could ever take up with such
pitiful Accounts of things.

Well then, The Christian Religion,
from small and weak Beginnings, spread
it self far, and wide, after a sudden and
strange manner; and this it did, against
all Probability, and contrary to all the
Rules of Success, which all other Rising
Opinions have ever set up with: It had
no One of those great Advantages,
some of which recommend every new
Sect, that stands, and prevails: and, as
for all other Lesser Helps, and Assis-
tances towards its Increase, which the
Wit of Man can assign; they are appa-
rently

serm. rently too weak to sustain the Weight

III. that is laid on them. It remains, therefore, that this wondrous Effect sprang undoubtedly from the immediate Influence of the First Cause, actuating after an Extraordinary manner the Industry, and blessing the Endeavours of the Apostles; stirring up the Minds of Men to attend to, and disposing their Hearts to embrace the Truths of the Gospel; in a word, accompanying all they said, and did, with mighty Signs and Wonders, with the *Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power.*

I have fully consider'd *Three* of the *Five* Points, on which I intended to discourse; having represented to You,

First, The Matter of Fact it self, to which the Prophecy of the Text refers; how swift and strange a Progress the Gospel really made, at, and after its first setting out from *Jerusalem*: Having prov'd to You,

Secondly, That this Success of it must have been *Miraculous*. After which I did, in the

Third

Third place, fairly lay together what I ^{SE R M.} thought might be offered to evade the ^{III.} Force of this Argument; and gave the several Objections their Answers. It remains that I should consider,

Fourthly, how great and how distinguishing an Advantage this brings to the Christian Institution; and to what Useful Ends and Purposes the Consideration of it may be apply'd: And then,

Lastly, Enquire into the Time when, and the Manner how this Miracle ceas'd, and make some suitable Reflections upon it, with regard both to Those who liv'd Then, when this stop was put to the Gospel, and to Us who live Now in the Latter Ages of the World.

But the handling of these two Points must be the Work of a Second Discourse.

PART II.

ISAIAH lx. 22.

*A Little one shall become a Thousand, and
a Small one, a strong Nation: I, the
Lord, will hasten it in His Time.*

SERM.
IV.

*OF the Five Points which I pro-
pos'd, from these Words, to han-
dle, Three have been consider'd: I come
now, in the*

*Fourth place, to shew, How great,
and how distinguishing an Advantage
it is to the Christian Institution, to have
been propagated after so swift and unac-
countable a manner; to what useful
Ends and Purposes the Consideration of
it may be apply'd. And,*

1st,

1st, This is, I say, an Advantage peculiar to the Christian Institution: For no other Religion ever had so large an Increase, with so little of Human Aid and Assistance; or prevail'd in such a manner, as to make a Recourse to Supernatural Influences necessary, in order to explain the Success of it. This may be collected, in great measure, from what hath been already hinted, in the preceding Discourse. However, I shall here resume the Reflection, and more particularly and fully evince the Truth of it.

Of all false Religions, the *Mahometan* came nearest to the Christian, in the swift manner of its Propagation; for in a small time it over-ran a great part of the Eastern World. But this Success, how extraordinary soever, had nothing miraculous in it; nothing, but what may easily be accounted for, by reflecting on the Circumstances (already intimated) with which the Propagation of that Imposture was attended: Such, as the loose Manners, and lamentable Divisions of the Christians of that time; the Suitableness of

SERM.

IV.

SER. M. of *Mahomet's* Doctrine to the sensual In-

IV. clinations of Men, especially of those Eastern People, to whom it was first address'd; and the Method he us'd of procuring Submission to it, by the Dint of the Sword, not by the Power of Persuasion and Argument. A Religion, that gave a full Indulgence to the Ambition, the Lusts, and Cruelty of Mankind, could not fail of gaining Profelytes; and, when a Warlike and Savage Race of Men, united by the hopes of Rapine and Spoil, set upon a dissolute, divided, and weakened Enemy (as the Christians then were) the Success of such an Enterprize was sure and easy: and on the Success of *Mahomet's* Arms the Success of his Religion depended. When, by an uninterrupted Course of Victories, he had laid the Foundation of the *Saracen* Empire, it was no wonder that a new Empire should be able to introduce a new Religion; the Increase of the One, was naturally follow'd by a proportionable Enlargement of the Other: which, therefore, I say, had nothing *miraculous* in it;

it; nothing, that rival'd, or any ways SERM.
 resembled the Success of the Gospel— IV.
 that Stone, which was cut out of the Dan. ii.
 Mountain, without Hands (*i. e.* without 34. 35.
 visible Causes and Instruments, propor-
 tion'd to such a Work) and brake in
 pieces all other Kingdoms, and at last be-
 came it self a great Mountain, and filled
 the whole Earth.

As to the Jewish Religion, it will not
 admit of any Comparison with the Chri-
 stian, either as to the Manner of its first
 Reception, or the Addition of Converts
 afterwards made to it. It was given to
 the Israelites, by Moses, in the Wilder-
 ness, whither he had led them out of the
 House of Bondage, in their way to a Land
 flowing with Milk and Honey. Now (set-
 ting aside the Consideration of Miracles
 by which the Jewish and Christian Dis-
 pensations were alike confirm'd) the Re-
 ception of the Law by the Israelites from
 such a Deliverer, under whose Conduct
 and Command they then entirely were,
 and in a place, where they had no Com-
 munication with the rest of the World,
 had

SERM. had nothing in it near so wonderful as the
 IV. first Plantation of the Christian Church
 by means of the Apostles Preaching. And,
 as to the Accession of Gentile-Converts,
 after the Tabernacle was set up in *Shi-
 loh*; it was too small and inconsiderable,
 to give the Religion of the *Jews* any
 Title, or Pretension to a Divine Orig-
 inal, on *that* Account.

The narrow Limits of the *Jewish*
 Church are thus, under the Emblem of
 a transplanted Vine, aptly represented by
 the Psalmist. *Thou hast brought* (says he)
a Vine out of Egypt, Thou hast cast out
the Heathen, and planted it; Thou pre-
paredst Room for it, and didst cause it to
take deep Root, and it filled the Land,
viz. the Land of Jewry, wherein it was
set. The Hills (i. e. the Hill-Country
 of *Judah*, the farthest Point of *Palestine*,
 Southward) *were covered with the Sha-*
dow of it, and the Boughs thereof were
like the Cedars of God, on Mount Leba-
non, in the Extremity of its Northern
Borders. She sent out her Boughs into
the Sea (the *Mediterranean* Sea, her ut-
 most

most Limit to the West) *and her Branches* S E R M.
to the River, even as far Eastward as the IV.
River Euphrates. Thus was the *Jewish* Ps. lxxx. 8.
 Church, even in its most ample and 9, 10, 11.
 flourishing Condition, shut up within
 the Bounds of *Canaan*, and the Coun-
 tries adjacent: Whereas that *Mustard-*
Seed, the Kingdom of *Christ*, though it
 were *less than all the Seeds that be in the* Luke xiii.
Earth, yet, *when it was sown, it grew* 19.
up, and became greater than all the Mark iv.
Herbs, and shot out great Branches, and
the Fowls of the Air lodged in the
Branches of it; Men of all Countries,
 and all Religions under Heaven flock'd
 to it for Shade and Shelter.

Indeed, the *Mosaic* Law was intend-
 ed for a single People only, who were to
 be shut in, as it were, from the rest of
 the World, by a Fence of Legal Rites,
 and Typical Ceremonies; and to be
 kept by that means separate and un-
 mix'd, till the great Antitype, the *Mes-*
siah, should appear, and break down this
 Fence, and lay open this Inclosure, pub-
 lishing a Religion of a more extensive
 Nature

SERM. Nature and Use, which all Mankind
 IV. should be invited to profess, and in which
 all would have an equal Interest. To
 these different Ends the *Law*, and the
Gospel, were severally design'd; and to
 these, therefore, the Different Circum-
 stances of their Promulgation, and the
 chief Parts of their Worship, were sever-
 ally accommodated. The *Law* was
 (as I said) given in the Desert, to a par-
 ticular People; the *Gospel* was publish'd
 in *Jerusalem*, before a mixt Multitude
 of various Nations and Languages. The
 Miracles, by which the *Law* was con-
 firm'd, were done before the *Jews* only,
 who alone were concern'd in them [for
 as to those perform'd by *Moses* in the
 sight of *Pharaoh*, and the *Egyptians*,
 they were not intended to authorize the
Law, which was not as yet given, but
 only to prove his Divine Mission for the
Temporal Rescue of that People:] Where-
 as the *Gospel*-Miracles were wrought be-
 fore the Enemies of the *Gospel*, in all
 Countries; because in all Countries the
Gospel was to be propagated, believ'd, and
 practis'd.

practis'd. The chief Parts of the Jewish SERM.
Worship (which consisted in Sacrifices) IV.

were confin'd to a certain Place, at which all the Males of that Religion were bound, thrice every Year, to appear; and that Religion, therefore, could be intended for such only as liv'd at no great Distance from the Jewish Temple: Whereas, when the Ends of the Earth were to be converted to Christ, the Christian Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, and even the great Oblation of the Eucharist, was to be perform'd every where with equal Degrees of Acceptance, according to the Prediction of *Malachi*, the last Prophet of the Jewish Dispensation. *For from the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place Incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure Offering; for my Name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.* Mal. i. 11.

The Jewish, then, and Christian Institutions, as they are widely different in many Respects, so particularly in This, that

SERM. that the one was, by its original Frame

IV. and Intention, limited as to Place, Persons, and Time: Whereas the other was to be diffus'd throughout the World, and to endure together with it, that is, to be, indeed, what we find it not long after its first Erection stil'd, the *Catholic Church*. *Whereunto, therefore, shall we liken this Kingdom of God, and its marvellous Increase? or with what Comparison shall we compare it?* There is, indeed, some faint Resemblance of it in the prodigious Fecundity of *Seeds*; which, accordingly, our Saviour makes use of more than once, to illustrate it: but there is nothing parallel to it in the History of all the Religions which have sprung up, and obtain'd amongst Men, from the beginning of the World to this Day.

Luke iv.
30.

And this *peculiar* Advantage of Christianity is so much the more remarkable, because,

2dly, It was presignify'd by *Types*, and foretold by various *Prophecies*. And when, therefore, the Event came to pass, it did, as it were, point out its Author, and

and declare itself to spring from Him, SERM.
 who alone *knoweth* and ordereth the IV.
Times and the Seasons, and calleth the
things that are not, as if they were.

Of *Types*, the most illustrious, and
 most worthy of our present Considerati-
 on, is That, which relates to the wonder-
 ful Increase of the *Israelites* in *Ægypt*,
 concerning which the Sacred Story speaks
 in very expressive and emphatical Lan-
 guage: *They were fruitful* (says *Moses*) Exod. i. 7.
and increased abundantly, and multiplied,
and waxed exceeding mighty, and the Land
was filled with them; and this (it seems)
 notwithstanding the Arts that were us'd
 to lessen their Numbers, notwithstanding
 the great Hardships and Severities that
 were laid upon them: For again it is said,
The more the Ægyptians afflicted them, Ib. v. 12.
the more they multiplied and grew. A
 livelier Image than which there cannot
 be of the thriving Estate of the Christian
 Church, under all the Cunning and Ma-
 lice of its Heathen Persecutors. Were
 the Seed of *Abraham* few, when they first
 came to sojourn in *Ægypt*? no more than

S E R M. *seventy* Souls? The Number of the first

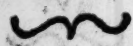
IV.

Disciples of Christ, on the Day of Pentecost, when his Gospel began to be propagated, was not much greater. Did the several Kings of *Egypt* keep a jealous Eye over the Children of *Israel*, and take all manner of unjust and cruel Methods to prevent their Increase? Just so fared it with the earliest Professors of the Gospel; the Rulers of the World harass'd and oppress'd them, and did what they could to crush Christianity, in its first Seeds, by severe Edicts, and Penalties, and subtle Contrivances. Did the *Israelites* thrive nevertheless, and multiply exceedingly; so as, in the Space of four hundred and thirty Years, from the time of the Covenant made with *Abraham*, to come out of *Egypt* above six hundred thousand strong, that were Men from twenty Years old and upwards, besides Women and Children, and a mixt Multitude, not rank'd into distinct Tribes and Families, that were without Number? The Increase of Christian Converts was yet more wonderful; and attended with this
remark-

remarkable Circumstance of Resemblance; SER M.
that it came to its utmost Pitch, near IV.
the same Period of Time, to wit, about
four hundred and thirty Years after our
Saviour had begun to preach and to say,
*Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is
at hand.* Such a strict Correspondence
there was between these Events, that
we may justly reckon the one of them,
as designed to prefigure and typify the
other. Especially, since the Promise
made to *Abraham*, about the Fertility
of his Descendants was so worded by
God, as at once to include the Increase
of his *Natural* and *Spiritual* Seed, and
plainly to point out that Access of Con-
verts from all Nations to the Church,
which should happen in the Days of the
Messiah. *In blessing I will bless thee,*
said God, *and in multiplying I will
multiply thy Seed, as the Stars of the
Heaven, and as the Sand which is up-
on the Sea-shore. And in thy Seed (i. e.
in Christ, the promis'd Seed) shall all
the Nations of the Earth be blessed.*
God begins, we see, with the Assurance

SERM. of a Temporal Blessing, a numerous

IV.



Off-spring, according to the Flesh, and ends with the future Enlargement of the Spiritual Kingdom of *Christ*; the former of these being indeed a Figure only, or Mystical Emblem of the latter, to which this Divine Promise chiefly referr'd, and in which it was finally and

Gal. iii. 8. fully accomplish'd. *For the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In Thee shall all Nations be blessed.*

Gen. xxvi. 4. The same Promise was afterwards expressly renew'd to *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, but to none other of the succeeding Patriarchs:

And from *these*, alone, therefore, God xxviii. 18. took his *Title*, and vouchsafed to be call'd the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; because to *these* alone he had made the Promise of that *Seed*, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, by being ingrafted into his Church, and becoming the Subjects of his Spiritual Kingdom.

Many

Many Predictions of the same kind are SER M.
 to be met with in the *Psalms*, and the IV.
Prophets; particularly in *Isaiah*; his *lxth*
 Chapter is nothing else but a Description
 of the glorious State of the Christian
 Church, upon the abundant Access of
 the *Gentiles*: And he closes that Prophecy
 as we have heard, with the *Text*, which
 in few Words comprizes the small Ap-
 pearance the Gospel should make at first,
 the vast Increase it should afterwards
 receive, and the speedy manner in which
 it should take place: *A little one shall
 become a Thousand, and a small one a
 great Nation; I the Lord will hasten it
 in His time*: In the *Messiah's* time this
 great Event shall come to pass; and,
 when it begins, it shall be *hastned*; it
 shall proceed with an astonishing and ir-
 resistible Swiftness, until it be fulfill'd.

If then the victorious Progress of the
 Christian Faith be in itself a sufficient
 Evidence of its Divine Original; that Ar-
 gument must needs be somewhat height-
 ned and improv'd, by considering, that
 the Spirit of Prophecy had long before

SERM. signify'd and promis'd this Success: For

IV.

from the same Spirit, from which the Prophecy came, the Completion of it afterwards proceeded. I add,

3dly, That the Advantage, peculiar in this respect to Christianity, doth from hence also appear, in that the wondrous Success of the Gospel confirms the *Truth* of those *Miracles*, by which it is said to have been planted, and frees the Account of them from all possible Suspicion of Mistake, or Imposture.

The only way that Infidelity hath left, to escape the Force of the Argument drawn from Miracles, is, by denying the Truth of the Facts. How unreasonable and absurd a Plea this is, may be shewn many ways, particularly from hence: That they, who deny the Credibility of the Gospel-Miracles, must allow somewhat else, altogether as incredible; to wit, that the Gospel was propagated into all the Regions, and subdu'd all the Religions of the World, without Miracles, which, considering the Meanness and Incompetency of the Instruments, that

that wrought this Effect, is itself a Mi-^{SERM.}racle, and the greatest of Miracles *. ^{IV.}

In vain, therefore, do some Men reject the Account of the Miracles done by the Apostles, if they admit (and they cannot but admit) the Account of the extensive and swift Propagation of the Gospel by the Apostles means; for the one of these Accounts evidently confirms and establishes the other. The very Existence of the World is a Proof, that it was at first miraculously created; and so, even the Existence of the Christian Religion (as at present spread and profess'd in the World) is a Proof, that it was at first miraculously planted. For the second Creation by *Christ Jesus*, can no more be accounted for by Natural Causes, than the first; and carries in it

* Πᾶς, εἰ μὴ σημεῖα ποίει ἵπαιον; εἰ μὴ ποίει, οὐκ ἔστι δυνάμεις ἢ εἰ δὲ μὴ ἵπαιον, καὶ ἐκράτου, πάλιν θαυμαστότερον ἢ τὸ συμβῆναι. Chryl. in 1 Cor. cap. 1. Ὅταν λέγῃσι μὴ γινώσκοντες σημεῖα, μιλῶντες ἑαυτοῦς περιπαροῦσι τοῦτο γὰρ μέγιστον σημεῖον, τὸ, χωρὶς σημείων, τὴν οἰκουμένην προσημαίνῃ ἀπάσαι, ὑπὸ δυνάμει πλῶκῶν καὶ ἀγνοημάτων ἀνθρώπων ἀνασθῆναι. Id. in Act. cap. 1.

SERM. as evident Marks and Impressions of an

IV. Omnipotent Power.

Now this is such a Proof of the Reality of the Apostles Miracles, as is wanting to those wrought for the Establishment of the Law of *Moses*; the Authority of which stands solely on the Authority of External Testimony, and the Traditional Belief of the Jewish Nation: but we have no Internal Evidence of their Truth from the Nature and Reason of the Event. This way of Proof is particular to the Gospel-Miracles; the Account of which comes to us, not merely as Matter of Historical Truth, but as in itself demonstratively certain; because Miracles were necessary towards diffusing the Gospel in that speedy and effectual manner, wherein it is confess'd to have been propagated. And, where an End cannot be obtain'd. without particular Means, the visible Accomplishment of the End is a sure Proof that those Means must have been employ'd, which were necessary towards attaining it. The Jewish Worship might possibly have been erected by *Moses* in *Canaan*,

Canaan, though he had wrought no one SER M.
Miracle to confirm it. The Christian IV.
Faith could not *possibly* have taken place
in all the World, unless Miracles had made
way for it: And the Truth, therefore,
of the Gospel-Miracles, is doubly cer-
tain to us, both from the Authority of
Testimony, and from the Reason of the
Thing; which gives a mighty Advan-
tage to them over those of *Moses*, and
cuts off all possible Occasions and Pre-
ferences of Distrust from the Infidel, and
the Gainsayer.

Thus much to shew, “ How great
“ and how distinguishing an Advantage
“ it is to the Christian Institution, to
“ have been propagated after so swift and
“ unaccountable a manner, as we find
“ it was.” It remains, that I should shew
likewise,

“ To what useful Ends and Purposes
“ This Consideration may be apply’d.

Three Things there are, which we may
plainly learn from it. For it enables us
to give a clear Account.

I. Why

SER M. I. Why the Destruction of *Jerusalem*,
 IV. and the utter Extermination of the *Jews*
 was delay'd till forty Years after the Death
 of our Saviour.

2. Why Miracles ceas'd so soon in the
 Christian Church, when they were con-
 tinu'd so long in that of the *Jews*; even
 as long at least as their first Temple
 lasted.

3. Why God did not suffer Human
 Learning, or the Civil Power to come in
 to the Support of Christianity; the one,
 till above a hundred, the other, till three
 hundred Years after our Saviour. And,

1. We may satisfy ourselves, Why the
 Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the utter
 Extermination of the *Jewish* State, was
 delay'd till forty Years after the Death of
Christ.

One would think, that the *Jews* had
 completely fill'd up the Measure of their
 Iniquities, when they spilt the Blood of
Christ, and made themselves in the most
 solemn manner answerable for the Guilt
 of it; and that they were even Then
 grown ripe for Divine Vengeance. But
 our

our Saviour having Pray'd on the Cross **SERM.**
 for his Murtherers, the Merit of that **IV.**
 Blood which they spilt, prevail'd with
 God to respite their Punishment for some
 time, and to leave them still farther room
 for Repentance. The Apostles, therefore,
 by an Express Order of our Lord, as an
 Antient Tradition informs us, tarried in
Judea and the neighbouring Countries,
Twelve Years after his Ascent; Preach-
 ing the *Gospel of Reconciliation* to the
Jews, and exhorting them to *Repent, and*
be Baptiz'd, every one of them, in the Name
of Jesus, for the Remission of their Sins:
 Particularly of that Great Sin they had
 committed in *Crucifying the Lord of Life;*
 which is mention'd, not only in the *First*,
 but in all the several Sermons Preach'd
 to them by *St. Peter, St. Stephen, and*
St. Paul, whereof an Account is pre-
 serv'd to us in the *Acts* of the *Apostles.*
 These Applications proving fruitless, and
 the Twelve Years expiring, God com-
 manded the Disciples to execute their
 Commission in its utmost extent, and to go
Teach and Baptize all Nations, that the
 Faith

SER M. Faith of the *Gentiles* might be a Reproach

IV. to the *Jewish* Infidelity. And so indeed

it was. For nothing could better illustrate the Infinite Goodness of God, and the incorrigible Perverseness of that People; than to observe, that the rest of the World flock'd in to the Obedience of Christ, as soon as the Apostles erected the Standard of the Cross, while the *Jews* still stood out Obstinate and Impenitent: The Rest of the World, I say, who had neither so immediate an Interest in the *Messiah* as They, nor were so capable of discerning his Character, and the Time of his Coming; nor had any Share in the Guilt of spilling his Blood, which might excite them the more eagerly to lay hold of the Gospel-Pardon. Within less than *Thirty* Years, after the *Apostles* set out from *Jewry*, they made Proselytes every where; *Their Sound went into all the Earth, and their Words unto the Ends of the World.* And now, therefore, God's Mercy to the Seed of *Abraham* being manifested in the most conspicuous manner, and their Infidelity being heightened by

Rom. x.
18.

all possible Circumstances of Aggravati-^{SERM.}
on, He inflicted the Sentence of Excision, ^{IV.}
which he had before pronounc'd; but
which could not be executed, till the
Church of the *Gentiles*, which was to
succeed that of the *Jews*, had taken suf-
ficient Root in the World. *Haste thee,* ^{Gen. xix.}
(said the destroying Angel to *Lot*) *escape* ^{22.}
to Zoar, for I cannot do any thing [i. e.
cannot execute my Commission against
Sodom] till thou be come thither. And, in
like manner, may the Spirit seem to have
quickned the Industry of the *Apostles*, by
saying, "Haste Ye, spread the Doctrine
" of *Christ* every where; for, till that be
" done, I cannot pour out my Fury on
" *Jerusalem.*" Thus had our Lord him-
self, a little before his Passion, declar'd,
This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be ^{Mat. xxiv.}
Preached in all the World, for a Wit- ^{14.}
ness unto all Nations; and then shall
the End come; that is, the *End* of the
Jewish Polity, and of the whole *Mosaic*
Dispensation. A

2d Thing, we may learn from the
swift manner in which the Gospel was
pro-

SERMON. propagated, is, to give ourselves from

IV. thence an Account, why Miracles ceas'd
so soon in the Christian Church, when
they were continu'd so long in that of
the *Jews*, even as long at least as their
first Temple stood.

The great Use of Miracles was, to
confirm the Truth, and promote the Re-
ception of the Gospel, at its first setting
out. That Use ceasing, Miracles like-
wise ceas'd; being gradually, and, in
about an Age after the Ascent of Christ,
almost totally withdrawn. For what
St. Paul says expressly of *Tongues*, holds
equally true of all other Supernatural
Gifts and Powers, indulg'd to the first
Promulgers of Christianity; they were
*Signs to those who believ'd not, not to
those who believ'd.*

Indeed, since the *Jewish* Dispensation
had receiv'd its Authority entirely from
Miracles, it could not, without more and
greater Miracles, be abolish'd. Since the
Kingdom of Satan, and the Idolatrous
Worship of the Heathen Gods, had been
erected upon *false* and *lying* Wonders;

true

true ones were necessary to overthrow it. SERM.

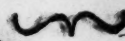
But, as soon as the Cross of Christ had IV.

every where triumph'd in some measure over *Judaism* and *Paganism*; there was no need of a continu'd Series of Miracles, to complete the Conquest, or to confirm the Faith of those who embrac'd Christianity. The manifest Reasonableness and Excellence of its Precepts, were of themselves sufficient to make it flourish still more and more, and baffle all remaining Opposition. Especially, since those, who were to live at the greatest distance from the Miracles done in the Infancy of the Gospel, might be as clearly satisfy'd of the Truth of them, as if they themselves had actually seen them; partly, from the Evangelic Writings, receiv'd early in all Christian Churches; and, partly, from the Reason and Nature of the Thing itself; it being (as I have already shewn) altogether impossible, that, without Miracles, such a Degree of Success should have attended the first Preachers of the Gospel.

But now, as to the Law of *Moses*, the Case was quite otherwise: For, though

SERM. it was usher'd in by Miracles, yet those

IV.  Miracles being perform'd in the Desert, without any Witnesses but what were of that Nation; and before a Race of Men, that were extinct, e'er the *Jewish* Worship was erected in *Canaan*; and the Account of those Miracles being contain'd in a Book, which was all along kept secret from the rest of the World; Infidelity found some Room, or Colour to suspect the Truth of them: Nor could it necessarily be inferr'd from that Degree of Success which the *Jewish* Religion met with, that it *must* have sprang originally from Miracles. The Whole of that Religion consisted in Ceremonious *Rites* and *Observances*, which had no Intrinsic Goodness in them, nor any clear Marks or Characters upon them of that Divine Authority by which they were commanded. Their *Typical* Use and Reference was little known to the *Jews* themselves, and could be less discern'd by those who were *Strangers to the Covenant of Promises*. In a word, the Law of *Moses*, as distinguished from all other Religious Institu-

Institutions, had nothing in the Frame SERM.
and Design of it, apt either to recommend IV.
it to its Professors, or to invite Profelytes. 

During such a Ceremonious State, it might be requisite for God, by frequent Manifestations of his Divine Power and Presence, to keep that backsliding People within the Bounds of their Duty, and procure Reverence to the Worship which he had set up, from the Idolatrous Nations around them: It might be requisite, I say, that he should, at fit Intervals, own himself to be the Author of their Religion, and do New Miracles, to keep up the Credit and Influence of the Old Ones. Miracles, therefore, continu'd in that Church for many Ages after its first Erection: For, besides those which their several Prophets occasionally wrought, the immediate Appearance of God in the *Shechinah*, or Cloud of Glory, and his Answers by *Urim* and *Thummim*, were familiar, while the Tabernacle, and first Temple lasted; and even many of their *Laws*, (for Instance, the *Law* of *Jealousy*, those for the At-

SERM. tendance of the *Jews* at their *Three Great*

IV. *Festivals*, and for their Resting in the *Sabbatic Year*) were so contriv'd, as to be Demonstrative Proofs of the Immediate Interposition of God in the Affairs of that People. With good Reason, therefore, was a long Succession of Miracles indulg'd under that Dispensation: Not so, under the Gospel, which, after it was sufficiently established, needed not New Signs and Wonders, to preserve, or promote the Belief of it; its Original Success being, as it were, a perpetual Standing Miracle, of sufficient Force to evince its Divine Extraction, from the Beginning of Christianity to the End of it.

A 3^d Use, which, I thought, might be made of the Miraculous Manner of Propagating the Gospel, was, to give ourselves from thence an Account, Why God did not suffer *Human Learning*, or the *Civil Power* to come in to the Support of it; the One, till at least an Hundred; the other, till three Hundred Years after our Saviour. The Design of this Part

Part of the Divine Conduct seems to have been, that the Establishment of our Faith might appear manifestly to be the Immediate Work of Heaven, and not owing to human Means, or any Set of Natural Causes. The Apostles themselves confess (and glory in confessing) that, as they Preach'd the Doctrine of *Christ* in the most simple, artless manner; not with *Excellency of Speech*, or the *Enticing Words of Man's Wisdom*; so the first Converts, whom their Labours brought over to the Faith, were generally mean Persons of no acquir'd Knowledge, no Rank, no Education. For, *Not many Wise Men after the Flesh, not many Mighty, not many Noble were call'd; but God chose the Foolish things of the World, to confound the Wise; and the Weak things of the World, to confound the things which were Mighty; and the Base things of the World, and the things which were despis'd did he chuse; yea, and the things which were not, (such is the Less'ning Phrase of St. Paul) to bring to nought the things which were.* The Reason of

S E R M.

IV.

¹ Cor. i.
26, 27, 28.

SERM. which *Choice* is plainly set down in the
 IV. following Words: *That no Flesh might*
 ~~~~~ *glory in his Presence*: He would have  
 no Rivals, no Sharers in the Glory of  
 this Event; and, therefore, produc'd it  
 in such a manner, and by such unpropor-  
 tion'd Means, as to make it impossible  
 for considering Men to mistake the true  
 Author; so, as that all, who look'd on,  
 Pf. cix. 27. should be ready to cry out, *This is thy*  
*Hand, and thou, Lord, hast done it.*

Indeed it was, on more Accounts than  
 one, requisite, that human Learning should  
 not be admitted into the Christian Church,  
 till it was sufficiently spread and settled.  
 For, tho' the Use of Learning might from  
 the beginning, have been great, in order to  
 confound the vain Sophistry, and wild Su-  
 perstition of the *Greeks*, and to vindicate  
 the Doctrine of *Christ* against all their Ob-  
 jections; yet great Inconveniences might  
 also have redounded to the Faith by the  
 means of it. For it must be confess'd,  
 that, when Philosophers in After-times  
 embrac'd our Religion, they blended it  
 often with the peculiar Notions of those  
 Sects

Sects in which they had been educated, S E R M.  
and by that means, corrupted the Pu- IV.  
rity and Simplicity of the Christian  
Doctrines. Had this happened from the  
Beginning, such an Early Mixture of  
Philosophy with Christianity would have  
bid fair for an Universal Reception in  
succeeding Ages. But the Gospel being  
first, for an Age and more, purely and  
simply profess'd, there was no great dan-  
ger of its suffering from the Subtleties  
and Refinements of Philosophy after-  
wards; because every Christian was then  
able to compare them with, and try them  
by, the plain Primitive Rule of Faith,  
receiv'd till that time in all Churches;  
and might securely reject, or admit them,  
upon such a Comparison.

For these Reasons, the Learned and  
Wise of this World seem to have been  
overlook'd by God in the first Plantation  
of the Gospel; that neither its Success  
might be imputed to their Skill and  
Assistance, nor its Doctrine run the  
Risque of being blended early with their  
particular Opinions. However, still we

SERM. may observe, that the Admission of  
IV. *Learning* was long before the Admission  
of the *Civil Power*; because the former, having less Force and Influence than the latter towards procuring the Establishment of the Gospel, was, consequently, less liable to be suspected as the Cause of it. Let me add also, that, as the Powers of this World would have been mightier Instruments of advancing Christianity, than human Learning could be, so would they have been more able, and more likely to corrupt it, and enervate the Force of it; as we find, that, not long after their coming into the Christian Church, they actually did: And therefore, on this Account likewise was their Admission longer postpon'd. For near three hundred Years after Christ, no *Roman Emperor* embraced the Faith; tho' they were (several of them) Men of great Moral Virtues, and *not far from the Kingdom of God*, as to their Personal Qualifications and Characters. Such, particularly, were *Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, Adrian*, and the two *Antonines*. Yet it pleas'd

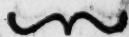


pleas'd the Divine Providence, that even S E R M.  
 these good Emperors, instead of IV. embracing,  
 and protecting the Christian Faith, should discourage and persecute it;  
 that so the *Kingdom of Christ*, which was  
*not of this World*, might not be beholden  
 to any of the Kingdoms of this World for  
 its Establishment; but spread and fix it  
 self every where, not only without the Aid  
 of Princes, but against their Will; in spite  
 of their fiercest Opposition, nay, even by  
 the means of it. *The Kings of the Earth*, Psal. ii. 2,  
4, 6, 8.  
*and the Rulers took Counsel together a-*  
*gainst the Lord, and against his Anointed.*  
*He that sat in the Heavens laughed them*  
*to scorn, the Lord had them in derision.*  
*He set his King upon his holy Hill of Sion,*  
*first; and then, gave him the Heathen for*  
*his Inheritance, and the uttermost Parts of*  
*the Earth for his Possession.* Herod, and  
 Pontius Pilate began this Opposition (for  
 thus hath St. Peter expressly apply'd the Act. iv. 27.  
 Prophecy) and the Roman Emperors,  
 till Constantine, continu'd it. Neverthe-  
 less, the Word of God went on, conquer-  
 ing to conquer; till it had subdu'd even

S E R M. these Subduers of the World to the Obedience of the Faith, and brought them to  
 IV. *cast their Crowns before the Throne* of the  
 Rev. iv. Lamb, and to acknowledge, that *The*  
 10. *Foolishness of God is wiser than Men, and*  
 1 Cor. i. *the Weakness of God is stronger than Men,*  
 25. even than the strongest, and the highest among the Sons of Men. There was then a Christian Church, long before there were any Christian Princes; She did not grow up under Their Shadow, but receiv'd them into Her Bosom: And, as she subsisted for several Centuries, e'er the Civil Power came in to her, so will she endure for endless Ages, when the Civil Power shall be no more; and even now, when she receives Protection and Encouragement from it, yet is She in all the chief Functions and Operations of the Ministers of her Spiritual Kingdom, independent upon it. Thus did God order things, on purpose, that the Distinction of these several Societies, Offices, and Powers might be evident; and perpetually without Encroachment or Confusion, preserv'd: And, *let no Man join together what God hath thus*  
 put

put asunder! It remains that I should, SERM.  
under my

IV.



V.

Fifth and last General Head, briefly inquire into the Time when, and the Manner how this Miracle ceas'd, and make suitable Reflections upon it, with regard both to those who liv'd then, when this Check was given to the Gospel, and to Us, who live now in the Latter Ages of the World.

The plain Answer to the Enquiry propos'd, is, That the Miracle ceas'd, when the Civil Power began to declare openly in Behalf of Christianity; that is, soon, after *Constantine* came to the Throne. For it was no longer a Wonder, that our Religion should thrive and flourish, when, instead of bitter Persecutions, it met with all manner of Encouragements. For a Century after *Constantine*, and upwards, the Number of Christians multiplied exceedingly in all the Parts of the World in which it had already been planted, and to which the Empire of the *Romans*, or their Influence, did extend. For  
above



SERM. above a Century after that, Christianity

IV. seems to have been at a stand; neither  
 gaining much Ground; nor losing much,

unless only in the Lives of its lukewarm Professors. But then it declin'd apace every day; Dissentions among Christians grew hot, and their Zeal for Religion waxed cold. The great Honours and Endowments, which Religious Princes had bestow'd on the Church, did too often occasion Ambition and Luxury in those who contended for them, or possess'd them. In a word, all the Vices of Prosperity abounded, together with the Advantages of it: So that the Name of Christianity was no longer Venerable in the Eyes of Men; and its holy Doctrine not producing an answerable Sanctity of Life, made no farther Impressions upon them. This unhappy Opportunity *Mahomet* laid hold of, to set up his Religion; which being (as I have said) suited to the Voluptuous Manners of the East, and seconded by the Power of the Sword, made large Inroads into Christendom, and tore away entire Provinces at once  
 from

from the Profession of the Gospel. Since S E R M.  
 that time, Christianity seems to have I V.  
 been almost in a continual Decay: *The* Pf. lxxx.  
*Hedges of this Vineyard of God being bro-* 12, 13.  
*ken down, all they that went by plucked*  
*off her Grapes: the Wild-Boar of the*  
*Wood did root it up, and the wild Beast*  
*out of the Field did devour it; till a*  
 Discovery of some unknown Parts of the  
 World open'd a new Way for enlarging  
 the Bounds of Christ's Kingdom. The  
 Zeal of some Devout Men, (tho' mixed  
 often with Private Interests and Designs)  
 stirr'd them up to make use of this Advan-  
 tage, and to Publish the Gospel of Christ  
 in the remotest Corners of the East, whi-  
 ther, it is probable, none of the Apostles  
 ever came. There also Christianity (a  
 corrupt and superstitious Christianity)  
 hath gotten footing. How long it may  
 continue, and how far it may advance, is  
 known to Him alone, *who hath deter-* Acts xvii.  
*min'd the Times before appointed, to Reli-* 26.  
*gions as well as Nations, and the Bounds*  
*of their Habitation.* I shall not pre-  
 sume to enquire into it; but shall raise  
 an

S E R M. an Useful Reflection or two from what  
 IV. hath been observ'd on this Head, and  
 with a short Application of it to our  
 Selves, shall conclude this Discourse.

The Imperfect Propagation of the Gospel, and the Prevalence of *Mahometism* \* over it, are some of the darkeſt Secrets of Divine Providence. But the Causes that contributed to produce this great Revolution are manifest: they were plainly the Vices and Discords of the Christians of those Times, that gave the Enemies of our Faith Courage to attack it, put Weapons into their Hands, and furnished them with all manner of Advantages

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\* Nulli unquam genti tam latè regnatum fuit, neque tam brevi temporis spatio unquam tot regiones, tot regna sub jugum miſſa. Incredible dictu, veriſſimum tamen eſt, octoginta aut non multo plurium annorum spatio, ſubjugarunt illi & Diabolico *Muhammedis* Imperio acquiſiverunt Palæſtinam, Syriam, Armeniam utramque, totam ſerme Aſiam minorem, Perſiam, Indiam, Ægyptum, Numidiam, Barbariam totam ad Nigrum uſque fluvium, Luſitaniam, Hiſpaniam. Neque hic ſtetit illorum fortuna aut ambitio, donec & Italiæ magnam quoque partem adjecerint, ad portas uſque urbis Romæ; quinetiam Siciliam, Candiam, Cyprum, & reliquas maris Mediterranei inſulas. *Mede Comm. Apoc. Lib. 3. Tuba 5. p. 468.*



against it. Christ came into the World SERM.  
on purpose to subdue the Power, and IV.  
destroy the Kingdom of *Satan*. He   
display'd the Banner of his Cross, and  
summon'd all Nations to repair to it,  
who accordingly obey'd the Signal. But  
while the Extremest Parts of the Earth  
were meditating a Submission, while his  
greatest Enemies were hastening to put  
their Necks under his Feet, a stop was  
put to their Intentions, and his Tri-  
umphs, by the Mutinies and Desertions  
of his own Soldiers. Who can sufficient-  
ly deplore the Guilt, and detest the Ill  
Influence of those Vices which cut off  
so many Kingdoms at once from the  
Empire of Christ? not only arrested his  
Doctrine in its full course, and said to it,  
*Hither shalt thou come, and no farther*;  
but made the Sun of Righteousness go  
*backward*, as it were, *ten Degrees*, and  
leave many Countries under gross Dark-  
ness, which had once been enlighten'd  
with the saving Truths of the Gospel?  
Certainly, Spiritual Faction and Pride,  
and Uncharitable Breaches of Christian  
Unity

SERM. Unity and Peace, are not such slight

IV. Offences as some Men are willing to think them; since it was owing in great measure to These, that the Universal Reign of *Christ* upon Earth was then hinder'd, and the Accomplishment of the Prophecies in that respect deferr'd to distant Ages.

Many Princes since, indiscreetly Pious, have made Attempts to regain the Ground, Christianity lost, by the Force of their Arms, and to plant the Faith anew in those Places, where it once had Possession, by the Points of their Swords. But (alas!) that great Work is to be accomplish'd, not by such *Holy Wars* as these; but by Conflicts of another kind, which we must maintain with our own Corrupt Habits, and Vicious Inclinations; not by Foreign Acquisitions, but Domestick Victories over those Impieties of Christians, which gave the great Enemy of our Faith his first Advantages against it: For tho' the

Matth. xi.

12.

2 Cor. x.

4.

*Kingdom of Heaven suffer violence, and the violent take it by force; yet the Weapons of our Warfare are not Carnal, but Spiritual.*

*Spiritual.* When the Conversations of SERM.  
 those that name the Name of Christ, be- IV.  
 come agreeable to the Purity of his Doc-   
 trine; when the Divisions of *Christendom*  
 are heal'd, and the Professors of our Holy  
 Faith live together every where like Men  
 of one Mind, in one House; then shall  
 the Sceptre of Christ's Kingdom extend  
 it self to all the unconverted Parts of the  
 Earth, and not sooner.

That God, e'er the Day of Final Doom,  
 will bring this about, the Scripture seems  
 to say: but of the particular Time, at  
 which he will effect it, we know no more,  
 than of That, in which he will come to  
 Judgment. However, let us All, as far  
 as lies in our Power, contribute to this  
 Great Event, and prepare the way for it.  
 None of Us, I think, are now oblig'd to  
 enter upon the *Mission*, and sacrifice our  
 Lives, in order to spread the Gospel among  
*Mahometans* and *Heathens*: I say, None  
 of us, I think, are now *oblig'd* to it, as  
 not being arm'd with the Power of *Mi-*  
*racles*, requisite for such an Attempt.  
 However, without hazarding our Lives,  
 I much



SERM. much may be done by us, both at Home

IV. and Abroad, towards encouraging and promoting so good a Work. And let us not blame, much less deride those Good Men (though of another Communion) whose honest Zeal hath carried them yet farther. Let us rather mention with Honour the Names of as many of them, as we can reasonably suppose to have been led into this Design by sincere Motives of advancing the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Souls, without aiming at By-Ends, or any Temporal Advantages; and let us wish, that the Reformation had not undergone just Reproaches for its Backwardness to promote so glorious an Enterprize: an Omission, not easily to be excused in such Protestant Nations, as have greatly enlarg'd their Traffick and Wealth, by the Productions of those Countries, wherein many poor Ignorant Savages dwell, who want only to be instructed in the saving Knowledge of *Christ*, in order to embrace it. But, *how shall they believe in Him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear,*  
with-

*without a Preacher?* It might justly be expected, that Those, who *had been partakers of the Carnal things of these Gentiles*, should have *ministred unto them in Spiritual things*; that, after enriching themselves by the Spoils of those Provinces (which I know not what Right they had to invade, and conquer) they should at least have made them that charitable Return of planting the Gospel among them; a Work, of greater Importance, and Service to the Publick than all their other *Plantations*.

SERM.  
IV.  
Rom. xii.  
14.

But this is a Reflection, in which, perhaps few, if any, that hear me, are concern'd. To conclude, therefore, Let every One of us, in our several Places and Stations, do our best to promote the Kingdom of Christ within us, by promoting the Love and Practice of Evangelical Purity and Holiness; and let us likewise frequently put up our most ardent Requests for the Enlargement of his Visible Administration without us; *beseeching* God, in the Words of our Church, that he would *please, of his Gracious*

SERM. *Goodness, shortly to accomplish the Num-*  
 IV. *ber of his Elect, and to hasten the King-*  
 ~~~~~ *dom of his Dear Son!*

*To Him, with the Father and the Holy
 Ghost, be ascribed all Honour, Do-
 minion, and Might, now and for
 ever! Amen.*

A Scornor Incapable of True Wisdom.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N

A T

W H I T E - H A L L,

October 28, 1694.

PROV. xiv. 6.

*A Scornor seeketh Wisdom, and findeth
it not.*

IT is the Wisest among the Childrens E R M.
of Men, who speaks; and about That, v.
• which most nearly concerns Us; and He
best understood, even the Method of at-
taining True Wisdom: It becomes us,

• M 2

there.

SERM. therefore, to give the most fix'd and serious Attention, we can, to what he is saying.

A Scornor, saith he, *seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not*. Where we are, first, to enquire, Who it is, that is represented to us, under the Character of a *Scornor*; and, then, in what Sense he is said to *seek Wisdom*, but *not to find it*.

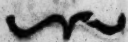
The *Scornor* is One, who is frequently mention'd in this Book of *Proverbs*; and against whom the Author of it hath levell'd no small Number of his Apophthegms, and wise Sayings. We find in the *Psalms* and *Prophetick* Writings also, many Glances at him, many Complaints of him; so that the Nation of the *Jews* did, it seems, abound mightily with this Sort of Men; and they were a Great and Particular Grievance to the Followers of True Piety and Wisdom.

Their Character seems, in short, to have been This. They were Men, that, with much ado, had made a shift to get rid of Good Principles, and such stiff Opinions, as they found inconsistent with a Loose

a Loose Practice. As they had not any SERM.
 Religion themselves, so their Way was V.
 to despise Those who had; to look down
 with Pity and Contempt upon a poor de-
 luded Under-World; beasts of Burthen
 that followed in a Track, after their
 Leaders; Slaves to receiv'd Rules, and
 Precarious Opinions, to Foolish Empty
 Forms and Observances; but who never
 once reason'd freely, or thought for Them-
 selves. They were unfortunately fallen
 into a Time, when frequent Commotions
 happen'd in the *Jewish* State (as the Case
 remarkably was, in the Age before *Solo-*
mon came to the Throne) and had seen
 several Sorts of Men uppermost, and,
 consequently, several Notions of things
 prevailing by Turns. This contributed
 mightily to unsettle their Thoughts, or
 (as they call'd it doubtless) to *enlarge*
 them; to create in them a slight Opinion
 of the Eternal Differences of Right and
 Wrong, Good and Evil; and to make
 them laugh at Those, who were Eager on
 any Side, or for any Cause whatsoever,
 which they did not get by.

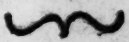
S.E.R.M.

V.



They evidently saw that Some, who sat up for greater Purity, and a Demurer Shew and Face of Religion than their Neighbours, were really Counterfeits, and meant nothing, at the Bottom, but Their own Interest. And they wisely resolv'd, upon this, that All Religion was, like Theirs, a Convenient Trick and Pretence only; invented by Cunning Men to keep silly People in awe, to make Princes Reign safely, and the Priesthood Live easily. But as for Them, they knew better things than to fall in with the Herd, and to give themselves up to be ridden by the Tribe of *Levi*; the Poorest and most Contemptible Tribe of the Twelve, which had no Lot, no Inheritance among their Brethren; but liv'd upon the Cheat of Sacrifices and Offerings; and upon driving a Gainful Traffick for the Good Things of This World, here paid down to them, by promising and preaching up to Those they dealt with, a Recompence in a World to come.

Nor

Nor were these Men content to enjoy S E R M.
 this Secret, which they had thus found V.
 out, quietly among themselves; but set 
 up openly for Proselytes, and a Party;
 for running down all Religion, and for
 laughing Piety and Virtue out of Coun-
 tenance: So that a Good and Honest
 Man was sure to be their Mark, where-
 soever they found him; and they were
 ever shooting their Arrows against him, Pf. lxiy. 3.
 even Bitter Words. And this was come
 to that pass, that the True Servants of
 God did almost sink under the Affliction;
 and did make it matter of Publick Re-
 quest to God in the Solemn Service of the
 Church, to be freed from it: — Have Pfal. cxlii.
 mercy upon us, O Lord, said They, have 3, 4.
 mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly fill'd
 with Contempt. Our Soul is exceedingly
 fill'd with the Scorning of Those that are
 at Ease, and with the Contempt of the
 Proud.

This is, in some measure, the Charac-
 ter of that Man, who, in the Language
 of the Text, is call'd *A Scorners*; and You
 see now, in what Sense he is said to seek

SERM. *Wisdom, but not to find it.* For the mean-

V. ing of these Expressions is plainly this ;

That he pretends to know more, and to see farther, than the rest of Mankind ; to have made freer Enquiries after Truth, and to have shaken off the Prejudices of Education more thoroughly : He sets up for examining things to the bottom, without taking them upon Trust, or relying on the Authority of any Man. What God is pretended to have said in the Holy Writings, what Wise and Good Men have said in all Ages, and Countries of the World, he is not much concern'd to know. To the *Oracles of Right Reason* he goes, (by Right Reason always meaning his Own) and from thence he enquires what he is to think, and to do ; raises some fanciful Scheme of things to himself, frames some particular Set of Opinions ; and then rejoices in the mighty Discovery he hath made, and wonders at the rest of the World, that they do not fall in with it, and adore it. Now these Pretences, the Wise-man tells us, are vain, and these Searches are vain ;
he

he hath taken a great deal of pains, only **SERM.**
to be out of the way, and to miss the **V.**
mark which he aims at: *A Scorners seek-*
eth Wisdom, and findeth it not.

Having thus largely open'd the Sense of the Text, I shall endeavour, in what follows, to justify the Truth of the Observation contain'd in it, by shewing you, how it comes to pass, that the Men, who thus set up for a more than ordinary pitch of Wisdom and Sense, by Contemning Religion, and Deriding the Professors of it, do always, and must always, fail of the End which they propose to themselves; since, whatever Abilities they may have in Other matters, yet they are the most unqualified and incapable, of all Men, to make impartial Enquiries after Divine Truth, and to discern between That and Error.

There are *Four* things, which particularly unfit a Man for such a Task, a very *Proud*, or a very *Suspicious* Temper; *False Wit*, or *Sensuality*. And These are the Chief and Prevailing Ingredients in the Composition of that Man, whom we call a *Scorners*. The Two Last do generally

SEN. nentially, and in most instances, belong to
 V. him: But the Two First are Essential to
 him, and inseparable from him.

Pride is that Ruling Quality which, of
 all others, seems to take the fastest Hold
 Prov. xxi. of him; *Proud and Haughty* Scorners is
 24 his *Name*, says *Solomon*, elsewhere. And
 Prov. xxx. again, *There is a Generation, O how lofty*
 13 *are their Eyes! and their Eyelids lifted up!*
 The truth is, there never was, nor ever can
 be a settled Contempt of Religious Prin-
 ciples, that is not built upon *Pride*, i. e.
 upon an undue Value, which a Man hath
 for himself, and for his own Opinion, and
 a Disregard for every thing besides: And,
 therefore, the Author of (that Fantastical
 Book) the *Leviathan*, doth, at the very
 Entrance of it, very honestly, and in Terms
 confess, that he is a Man who *Loves his*
own Opinions. And so, doubtless, doth
 every Man too, who treads in His Steps,
 tho' he doth not own it so frankly, or per-
 haps know it so thoroughly. Indeed a
 Modest Humble Man can hardly bring
 himself once to think of shaking off com-
 mon

mon receiv'd Principles, and going a-^{SERM.}gainst the United Wisdom of Mankind: ^{V.}
or, if he should entertain, yet will he
never venture to publish that Thought;
but will conceal it, as carefully as he
would his own Bosom Infirmity, or the
Secret of his Friend. 'Tis the presump-
tuous and proud Man alone, who dares
to trample on those Truths, which the
rest of the World reverence; and can sit
down quietly in the Assurance, that He
alone is in the Right, and all Mankind
beside in the Wrong.

Now, I say, as there is no one Quali-
ty, that sticks more closely to a Scorn-
er than that of Pride, so is there none that
doth more evidently obstruct right Rea-
soning, and an impartial Search after
Truths of all kinds, especially those which
relate to Virtue and Piety. And no
wonder therefore, if on this Account
the Scorners, tho' he *seek Wisdom*, yet *find-
eth it not*. *Pride* makes a Man seem suf-
ficient in his own Eyes, for all manner of
Speculations and Enquiries; and, there-
fore, puts him indifferently upon the Pur-
suit

SERM. suit of all Knowledge, and the Determination of all Doubts, without giving him Leave to distrust himself in the least, or once to consider, which way his Genius and Abilities lie. Hence it happens, that the Man, not being duly qualified for every Search, or, if he were, yet not having Leisure and Opportunity enough to go through with it, is fain to take up with slight and superficial Accounts of things; and then, what he wants in true Knowledge, to make up in downright Assurance. As soon as he hath touch'd on any Science, or Study, he immediately seems to himself to have master'd it; is as positive in his Opinions, and as hardy in his Assertions, as if the Thoughts of his whole Life had been directed that way only: Which is, as if a Coaster, who had gone from Port to Port only, should pretend to give a better Description of the Inland Parts of a Country, than those who have travell'd it all over. But this, I say, is the mischievous Nature of Pride; it makes a Man grasp at every thing, and, by Consequence,

sequence, comprehend nothing effectually SERM.
and throughly; and yet (which is worst V.
of all) inclines him to despise and con-
tradict those that do. It gives him just
enough Understanding, to raise an Ob-
jection or a Doubt; but not enough to
lay it: Which, as it is the meanest and
most despicable, so it is also the most
dangerous State of Mind a Man can be
in; and by so much the more dangerous,
as the Subject, upon which his Enquiries
turn, is more important, and the Errors
more fatal which he runs into, for want
of a due Knowledge of it. He that is
but half a Philosopher, is in danger of
being an Atheist; an Half-Physician is
apt to turn Empiric; an Half bred Man
is conceited in his Address, and trouble-
some in his Conversation. Thus it is in
all Matters of Speculation, or Practice;
He that knows but a little of them, and
is very confident of his own Strength,
is more out of the way of true Know-
ledge, than if he knew nothing at all.
Now there is, I say, a natural Tendency
in Pride, towards putting a Man's Mind
into

SER M. into such a Situation as this; and, therefore, it must needs be a Quality very opposite to the Search and Attainment of true Wisdom.

And then, supposing a proud Man to be once in the Wrong, it is scarce possible that he should ever be set right again; he is plac'd above the reach of that great Means of Amendment, Reproof; *A*

Prov. xiii. *Scornful heareth not rebuke, says Solomon:*

And, therefore, as his Pride led him into a Mistake at first, so will it be sure to keep him there; and to harden him in his way, against whatever wise Men can think, or say of him.

Thus, I say, is Pride an Enemy to the Knowledge of Truth in general; but most of all doth it hinder Men from discerning Sacred Truth, and the Doctrines of Reveal'd Religion. A proud Man is very hardly brought to digest the humble Duties of the Cross, or to admit a Belief of the Mysteries of Christianity: The one are too low for him, and he cannot stoop to the Practice of them; the other are too high for his Understanding, and he

he desires to be excus'd from entertain-
 ing any Proposition as true, which he
 doth not perfectly comprehend. If he
 cannot give himself a certain plain Ac-
 count, in what Manner, and to what
 End God did a thing; he wisely resolves,
 that therefore he did it not at all. If he
 hath not as clear an Idea of every Term
 in an Article of Faith, as he hath of those
 in a Mathematical Proposition; 'tis pre-
 sently unphilosophical, absurd, and fool-
 ish; invented by those, whose Interest it
 is to puzzle Mens Understandings, that
 they may have their Wills and Affections
 at their Service.

S E R M.
 V.

And this puts us in mind also of that
Second great Ingredient in the Character
 of a Scornor, which we propos'd to con-
 sider; a strange and unreasonable De-
 gree of *Suspicion*, by which he doubts of
 every thing he hears, and distrusts every
 Man he converses with; imagines the
 World to be all Cheat and Imposture;
 that there is no Sincerity, no Honesty
 any where; but that every Man is con-
 tinually

II.

SER M. continually studying how to put a Trick up-
 V. on his Neighbour. Without this Tem-
 per (it might be easily prov'd, that) a
 Man cannot bring himself to run down
 Religion, and the Professors of it; and,
 with it, it is impossible, I think, to ar-
 rive at true Wisdom. Indeed, to be
 cautious, and upon our Guard, in re-
 ceiving Doctrines, and not easily to give
 up our Assent to every Tale that is told
 us, is a Point of great Prudence, and
 very requisite, in such a Multiplicity of
 Opinions as there is in the World, to pre-
 serve us from Error. But then, we may
 carry this Point too far; we may be so
 scrupulous and circumspect in admitting
 the Testimonies of Men, as to reject some
 good Witnesses among several bad ones;
 and to deceive ourselves oftentimes, for
 very fear of being deceiv'd by others.
 A general undistinguishing Suspicion is
 altogether as apt to mislead a Man, as a
 too easy and unwary Credulity. And to
 this Excess a Scornor is naturally in-
 clin'd: He is so possess'd with the Notion
 of *Priestcraft*, and *Pious Frauds*, as to
 apply

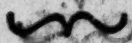
apply it indifferently to all Religions, and to every thing in Religion: He is so afraid of having his understanding impos'd upon, in Matters of Faith, that he stands equally aloof from all Propositions of that Kind, whether true or false: Which is, as if a Man should refuse to receive any Money at all, because there is a great deal goes about that is false and counterfeit; or resolve not to make a Friendship or Acquaintance with any Man, because many Men are not to be trusted. Certainly this is a very great Instance of Folly; and, in what Breast soever it harbours, cannot but indispose a Man extremely for the Study and Attainment of Religious Wisdom. An Extremity of Suspicion in an Enquirer after Truth, is like a raging Jealousy in an Husband, or a Friend; it leads a Man to turn all his Thoughts toward the ill-natur'd Side, and to put the worst Construction upon every thing; and (in Consequence of that) for once that he is really in the Right, in his Guesses and Con-

VOL. I.

N

tures,

SERMON. fures, to be very often, and very much
v. in the Wrong.



III.

A *Third* Part of the Character of that Man whom we are describing, is, *False Wit*: or a Way of exposing Things sacred and serious, by passing a bold Jest upon them, and ridiculing Arguments, instead of confuting them. The very Name of a *Scornor* will tell us, that this is one of his most belov'd Accomplishments: And, I am sure, it is such an one, as can never help a Man to procure right Impressions of Things, and will scarce ever allow him to improve or preserve them. Wit indeed, as it implies a certain uncommon Reach and Vivacity of Thought, is an excellent Talent, very fit to be employ'd in the Search of Truth, and very capable of assisting us to discern and embrace it: But in the Way in which the Scornor exerts it, the Way of Satyr and prophane Drollery, it betrays a Man into a thousand Errors, for one that it discovers to him. Men of quick and lively Parts are apt to give

themselves a loose beyond plain Reason's ERM.
and common Sense, and to say many
things not exactly right and true, in or-
der to say somewhat new and surprizing.
Their great Aim is, in general, to please;
and, in order to it, they must bend all
their Wit that way, to which the corrupt
Nature of Man is inclin'd, and be sure
always to speak *against* that which is up-
permost; I mean the Opinions that are
most general and prevailing. This gives
them a light and trifling, instead of a se-
rious and manly Frame of Spirit; and
makes them think, they have answer'd
all the wisest Reasons that can be brought
for any thing, if they have but clapp'd a
Nickname upon it, and dress'd up a grave
and venerable Truth in so odd a Disguise
as to raise Mirth and Laughter from it.
Thus a late Person, eminent for Wit and
Wickedness, till a Death-bed made him
more serious, and gave him truer Appre-
hensions of Things, us'd to please him-
self mightily with this Thought, that
the doing of a Miracle was only another
Phrase for the *shewing of a Trick*: And

SER. M. having once represented the Thing to
 V. himself under such a light Image, he
 could hardly be brought to think reverently of it ever afterwards; or to allow the strongest Arguments which could be brought for the Truth of Miracles, a due and impartial Consideration. And thus also the great Leader of the Libertines of this Age (whom we have already had Occasion to mention) made sport with the Doctrine of the *Divinity* of Christ, by translating, after an absurd manner, the *Greek Word* *Λόγος*, (which St. *John* applies to him) and assuring us, that That Appellation given to our Saviour, was, in our Tongue, as much as to say, the *Verb of God*. And this vain and blasphemous Criticism he thought sufficient to overthrow a prime Article of the Christian Faith. In the same manner he pretended to ridicule the Doctrine of Grace, by enquiring into the Meaning of two Words, generally used by Divines concerning it, to wit, *Infusion* and *Inspiration*; and by informing us, that they signified, in plain *English*, *Inpouring* and *Inblowing*.

Inblowing. I bring these Instances to SERM.
shew, how far a Scornor may be led out V.
of the Way of Truth, by a little Knack
of playing upon Things and Words,
which he miscalls *Wit*; and upon which
he shall Value himself more, and be wiser
in his own Conceit than *seven men that*
can render a reason.

The *Fourth* and last Thing, from
whence we propos'd to give an account of
his Deceptions, was *Sensuality*: and whe-
ther this too doth not, for the most part,
accompany a Contempt of Religion, I
appeal to the Observation and Experience
of every one that hears me. Look round
the World, and you shall seldom find a
Man loose in his Principles, who is not
so likewise in Manners. There may pos-
sibly be, now and then in an Age, an
Instance of some cold phlegmatick Man
that shall set up for overturning Religion
and Morality, merely for the Sake of
Contradiction, or to get himself a Name
by it, without the Design of indulging
his own Appetites in so doing. But this

SERMON, is a very rare Case; generally the Scorn-
 V. ers are, as St. Peter and St. Jude have
 in their several Epistles agreed to de-
 2 Pet. iii. scribe them, *Men, who walk after their*
 3. Jude 13. *own Lusts.* Accordingly, we may ob-

serve, that this scorning Humour hath
 been most prevalent in those Ages of
 the World, in which the Love of
 Pleasure, and the Arts of Ease and
 Luxury did most abound; and is com-
 monly incident to Men, at that Time
 of their Lives, when their Lusts are
 most ungoverned, and their Blood boils
 hottest. 'Tis chiefly the young robust
 Sinner that indulges himself in it, *whilst*
 he is in the midst of his Enjoyments:
 For though a Man may continue in
 the Practice of this impious Folly to
 the very End of his Life, yet the Ha-
 bit itself is generally formed much
 earlier.

Now the Sensual Man is, of all Men
 living, the most improper for Enqui-
 ries after Truth, and the least at Lei-
 sure for it. He is never sedate and
 cool; and therefore, not able to fix
 his

his Attention to a Point, and go through S E R M.
with it. He is never disinterested and V.
impartial; and, therefore, not capable 
of deliberating freely. He is already
under the Dominion and Power of his
own Lusts; and perhaps likes to be so,
and is very unwilling to shake off his
Chains. Now such a Man, so quali-
fied, is, no doubt, a very incompetent
Judge of Divine Truth, and very unfit
to consider the Pleas that are brought
for it. His Search into these Things
is like to be with no great Evenness
and Fairness: How can it, when he comes
with strong Wishes, that he may find
it all a Mistake? Indeed, when a Man
allows himself in all Sorts of Impuri-
ties, and is determined to go on in
them; and yet finds himself under the
troublesome Restraint of Principles, and
the Dread of Religion, which hangs con-
tinually over him; the only way for him
to pursue his Enjoyments, and yet be
easy, is, to set his Face directly against
the Doctrines of Religion, that give him
any Check or Disturbance, and resolve to

SER M. get rid of them as soon as he can. And

v.

he may put the Thoughts, which arise in him upon this Occasion, together, and make a Book of them, if he pleases; and then tell us, that this is a sober Enquiry after Truth, and a free Discussion of the Point in Debate; but there is nothing of that in it: He thinks of Truth, just as a Man doth of his Enemy, with Spite and Anger, and a Design only of finding out whatever may blast and expose it. This is a strange contumelious way of treating Divine Things, and would tempt even a good Man to return the Affronts done to Virtue and Piety, by opening the Characters of those who do them; in which we should commonly find, that Sensuality and Looseness of Life had a very great and particular Share. But some Men, who write pretended *Histories of Religion*, are beholden to the real Religion of others, that their Histories are not written.

Thus have I run through those four several Properties, which remarkably belong to the Character of *a Scornful*; and

shewn

shewn you, how each of them contri-
butes to misinform and mislead him in
his Pursuit of Wisdom; so that, suppo-
sing him really and in good Earnest to
seek it, yet, thus setting out, and thus
qualified, it is not at all probable that he
should find it.

SERM.
V.


And now the plain and obvious Use
we are to make of this Discourse, is, to
satisfy ourselves from hence, how it
hath come to pass, that the True Reli-
gion, all along, in the several Ages of
the World, hath not been entertain'd
by many of the seemingly Wittiest and
Wiseest among the Children of Men.
To this startling Question we can now
give a short and easy Answer, from
the Observation of the Text, *They were
Scorners.* They were either *Proud*
and Opinionative Men, that could not
endure to learn plain humble Lessons
of Piety and Goodness, especially from
such as they had no Esteem of, no
Value for; Or their Minds were
tainted with an ill-natured and unrea-
sonable *Suspicion*, which, from finding
out

SERMON. out some Cheats in Religion, led them

V. to pronounce all Religion a Cheat.

They had a Talent, perhaps, at *ridiculing* honest Rules and Maxims, and making Sport with Things sacred and serious; and, therefore, to have own'd any fix'd Scheme of Religious Principles, would have been a mighty Damp to their Imaginations, and have taken away from them the Subject of above half their Wit and Pleasantry. Or, lastly, They were Men of *sensual* and *impure Lives*, who were resolv'd to make their Opinions and their Pleasures as consistent as they could; and who therefore, were oblig'd, in point of Interest, to disbelieve every thing that made against them.

This is the short and true Account of the Matter; and will appear to be so, if we cast our Eyes backward on the Story of the World, and consider, who they have been, that have rejected the true Religion, all along from the Creation down to this Time.

In

In the Old World, *Noah*, who was ^{2 E R M} the only Man that preserv'd the Wor- ^{V.}ship of the True God in his Family, seems to have been an honest plain-hearted Man; *just and perfect in his* ^{Gen. vi. 9.} *Generation*, (as he is describ'd in Scripture) *and walking with God*. The rest of the World are said to have eaten and drunken, to have married and been given in Marriage, *i.e.* they were Men, who liv'd in all the Enjoyments of Sense, who revell'd, and took their Fill of all the Good Things of this World; and, to be sure, were very merry, and very bitter upon those that did not. How did they deride that Grave Preacher of Righteousness, and his Precise Family, when He and his Sons talk'd to them of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment! Especially, when he told them that there was such a Flood coming, and that he was building that Ark to preserve himself and his Household, what a Jest was he to the Men of Parts and Pleasure! How many Scornful and Gay Things were said upon this Occasion, while

SER M. while the Work went forward, by Those,
 v. who thought themselves very Wise, and
 Him very Foolish! But the Fountains of
 the great Deep were broken up, and the
 Windows of Heaven open'd; and Then
 they began to change their Opinions,
 when (alas!) it was too late to learn.

In the next great Period after the
 Flood, the true Religion was confin'd to
 the single Nation of the *Jews*: and one
 may think it strange at first sight, that
 if it were the True Religion, it should
 be so confin'd; that the wise and knowing
 Part of Mankind should not discern the
 Strength of the Evidence that was brought
 for the Divine Original of the Law of
Moses, nor receive the God of *Israel* for
 Their God. But, if we consider a little
 farther, we shall be satisfied, that the true
 Reason of Mens Infidelity, throughout
 this long Period of Time, was, a Mean
 and Contemptuous Notion they had en-
 tertain'd of the *Jewish* People, and of their
 Rites and Ceremonies. The Wise Men
 of the *East*, in the Earliest Ages, and the
 Philosophers of the *West*, in Later Times
 had

had too high an Opinion of themselves, S E R M.
 and too low an one of that Little, Nar- V.
 row-soul'd Superstitious Nation, to sub-
 mit themselves to be taught by them.
 The *Jews* were a Proverb and a By-word
 to the rest of the World, the perpetual
 Subject of their Scorn and Reproach:
 And who can think (may we suppose
 one of those Wise Heathens to have said)
 that Truth should lie hid among such an
odd sort of People, in such a little Spot
 of the World?

And thus, again, when Christianity
 first appear'd, it made no great Progress
 among the Disputers of this World, a-
 mong the Men of Wit and Subtlety, for
 this very Reason; *because* they were Scor-
 ners. The Gospel was to the *Jews* (to
 the most Learned and Proud Sect among
 the *Jews*, the *Pharisees*) a *stumbling-block*; 1 Cor. i.
23.
 and to those of higher Repute among
 the *Greeks*, *foolishness*. The great Pre-
 tenders to Knowledge every where una-
 nimously contemn'd and derided it, as a
 poor and low System of Principles; and
 could never once think of humbling their
 Minds,

SER M. Minds, to entertain the Simplicity of the
 V Gospel.



How should the Great Lords of the Earth, who swarm in all the Delights of Sense, and thought themselves born to enjoy them, submit to be talk'd out of their Pleasures and their Privileges by a few Ignorant Fishermen, and Tent-makers? The Story of the Propagation of the Gospel in *Jewry*, might perhaps make a part of the Conversation in the Court of *Tiberius*; it was, probably, such a Subject of Discourse to Them, as the *Quietists* in *Italy* were to Us, at their first appearing. The Novelty of the Thing might occasion some Reflections, and Enquiries: But it was not to be expected, that Men of Pleasure and Parts should give themselves the Trouble of Examining nicely into the Pretensions with which this New Religion set up, or of considering, in good Earnest, whether they ought to become Profelytes to it.

We are not to wonder, therefore, if, in some Ages after Christianity, we find

not

not much said to the Advantage of it, in SERM.
the Writings of those Eminent *Greeks* V.
and *Romans*, who are allow'd to have
been the best Masters of Polite Thought
and Expression. Alas! *Porphry* must
have been contented to confess the Va-
nity of Philosophy, and *Lucian* must in
great measure have foregone his Skill in
Satyr; the Witty Libertines of those
Times must have parted with much of
the Esteem they had, and with most of
their Pleasures, if they had once admir-
ed the Truth of Christianity: And,
therefore, they agreed in running down
the Reputation of That, lest they should
lose their Own.

And, as it was immediately after our
Saviour's coming, so hath it been ever
since, to this very day. The Doctrines
of the Cross have never in any Age met,
nor will they ever in any future Age,
meet with a kind and hearty Reception,
among Those, who sit in the Seat of
the Scorners.

But let us not therefore be dejected,
because there are Many whom the World
esteems,

A Scornor Incapable

SERM. esteems, who yet esteem not Us, and
 V. our Holy and Undeiled Religion! Nei-
 ther let us suspect ourselves, as being
 out of the way and impos'd upon, because
 Men of a greater Reach perhaps, and of
 a more improv'd Understanding than We,
 are not of our Mind. *Solomon*, who was
 certainly a Man of Understanding, and
 who was of our Mind, doth, in a very
 few Words (which I cannot repeat too
 often) afford us a full and comfortable
 Solution of the Case; *A Scornor* (saith
 he) *seeketh Wisdom, and findeth it not.*

From the Account of former Times it
 appears to us, that thus it always *hath*
been; and from Reflections on the Nature
 of Man, that thus it necessarily *must be*;
 and, therefore, let us possess our Souls in
 Patience and Peace; and go on in the
 plain Paths of Godliness and Honesty,
 without Turning to the Right, or to the
 Left, for whatever Men scornfully witty
 can say of us, or to us.

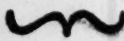
Prov. iii.
 34.

Let us beg of Him, *who scorneth the*
Scorners, but giveth Grace unto the Low-
ly, let us beg of him to Bestow on us, to
 Preserve,

Preserve, and Increase in us that *serious* ERM.
and humble Frame of Spirit, which alone V.
 can qualify us for a Right Apprehension
 of the Truths and Mysteries of the Gos-
 pel; and which is, therefore, certainly,
 Preferable to all other Endowments of
 Mind, however the World may have mis-
 plac'd the greatest Part of its Esteem up-
 on them.

And let us, in order to this End,
 frequently take to our selves the hum-
 ble Words of the *Son of Syrach*, and
 say, *O Lord, Father and God of my* Eccluf. xxiii. 4,
Life, give me not a proud Look; but turn 5, 6.
away from thy Servant always an haughty
Mind! Turn away from me vain Hopes
and Concupiscence, and thou shalt hold him
up that is desirous always to serve thee!
Let not the Greediness of the Belly, nor
Lust of the Flesh take hold of me; and
give not over Me thy Servant to an Im-
pudent Mind!

And as for those who contemn Us,
 and our Narrow Principles, and who
 make us their Derision daily, let us
 (in the Words of the Apostle) *not cease* Eph. i. 16,

SERM. *to make mention of them in our Prayers,*
V. *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,*
 *the Father of Glory, may give unto them*
the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation to
the Acknowledgment of him: The Eyes
of their Understanding being enlightned,
that they may know, what is the Hope
of his Calling, and what the Riches
of the Glory of his Inheritance in the
Saints.

A DIS-

A
DISCOURSE

Occasion'd by the

DEATH

Of the Right Honourable

The Lady CUTTS,

An. Dom. M, DC, XCVIII.

ECCLES. vii. 2.

It is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of Feasting: for that is the End of all Men; and the Living will lay it to Heart.

THE first Step towards Happiness SERM.
is, to correct our false Opinions VI.
concerning it, by learning to esteem
O 2 every

SERM. every thing, not according to that Rate
 VI. and Value, which the World, or our
 own mistaken Imaginations may have
 plac'd upon it, but according to that
 which in it self, and in the Accounts
 of right Reason and Religion, it really
 bears.

The Preacher therefore hath, in this
 Chapter, laid together a Set of Reli-
 gious Paradoxes ; which, however they
 may startle and shock us a little, upon
 the first hearing, yet, when closely ex-
 amin'd, will appear to be clear unques-
 tionable Truths, by which the whole
 Course of our Lives ought to be steer'd
 and govern'd.

In the first Verse of this Chapter (the
 Verse before the Text) he tells us, that *a
 Good Name is better than precious Oint-
 ment, and the Day of one's Death than the
 Day of one's Birth. A Good Name is bet-
 ter than precious Ointment ; i. e. rich Oils,
 and sweet Odors (in the Use of which
 the People of the East much delighted)
 are not half so grateful, or valuable, as a
 good Reputation, well founded : This*
 is

is more truly fragrant, more diffusive S E R M.
 of its Influence, more durable: It gives VI.
 a Man greater Comfort and Refresh-
 ment, while he is Living; and preserves
 him, when Dead, better than the most
 precious Embalmings.

And again, *The Day of one's Death is better than the Day of one's Birth*; i. e. the *Day of the Death* of such an one, as possesses and deserves a *Good Name*; of such an one, as hath liv'd well, and dy'd well, is preferable by far to the *Day of his Birth*: For it gives him Admittance into a State of perfect Rest and Tranquillity, of undisturb'd Joy and Happiness; whereas the Day of his Birth was only an Inlet into a troublesome World, and the Beginning of Sorrows.

And then it follows, very naturally, in the Words of the Text, that *It is better also to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of Feasting*. As Death to a good Man is more advantageous than Life; so to a wise Man the Contemplation of the First is more desirable than all the Enjoyments of the

A Discourse on the Death

SERM. Latter: He had much rather be present
 VI. at the sad Solemnities of a Funeral,
 than partake of those Festival Rejoicings,
 which are usual in all Nations, but e-
 specially among the *Jews*, at the Birth
 of a Child.

Hard Doctrine this, to the Men of Li-
 berty and Pleasure! who have said to
 themselves, *Come on, let us enjoy the
 things that are present, let us fill our
 selves with costly Wine and Ointments,
 and let no Flower of the Spring pass by
 us; let us crown our selves with Rose-
 buds before they be wither'd.* Hard
 Doctrine, I say, it is to such Men as
 these; and which will run the Hazard of
 not being entertain'd by them. The
 Wise Man therefore hath condescended
 to prove, as well as assert it, and to
 back the severe Rule he hath laid down,
 with very convincing Reasons: *For that,*
saith he, is the End of all Men, and the
Living will lay it to heart. As if he had
 said, This Dark and Melancholy State
 it will one Day certainly come to Our
 share to try; and what must some time

or other be undergone, ought to be con- S E R M.
sider'd beforehand : this is *the End of all* VI.
Men; and all Men therefore should have
their Eye and their Thoughts upon it.
And then farther—We are most of us
so immers'd in the Pleasures, and so
taken up with the Follies of Life, that
we need all Methods of reducing our
straggling Thoughts and Desires, and of
giving our selves a serious Frame and
Composure of Mind : and of all Me-
thods, this of repairing to the House of
Mourning, is best adapted to that Good
End, and will soonest and most effectually
bring it about ; *The living will lay
it to heart.*

I have largely explain'd the Connexion
and Meaning of the Words, which have
been pitched upon to employ Your
Thoughts on this mournful Occasion.
The next thing should be, to excite You
to a Compliance with the Direction
there given, by the particular Arguments
suggested in the Text, and by several o-
ther powerful and moving Considera-
tions : to prove to You, the Folly and

A Discourse on the Death

SERM. Emptiness of a Life led all in Mirth and
 VI. Jollity, and Pleasure; the Wisdom and
 Reasonableness of shifting the Scene
 sometimes, of turning the gloomy side
 of Things towards our selves, of ex-
 changing *the House of Feasting for the*
House of Mourning, and of making a
 discreet and decent Use of those sad
 Opportunities of Reflection, which God,
 mercifully severe, is pleas'd to put into
 our Hands.

But I am prevented in this part of my
 Discourse, by the Pious Design of this
 present Assembly; You are already do-
 ing that which I should recommend to
 You from the Text; paying the Tribute
 of Your Tears to the Memory of One,
 whose Worth you knew, and whose Loss
 You sensibly feel; and bewailing Her,
 under the different Characters She bore
 of a Wife, a Daughter, a Relation, a
 Mistress, a Friend.

All, therefore, I have to do, on this
 Occasion, is, to fall in with Your Pious
 Grief, already rais'd, and to bear a part
 in it, by dwelling together with You a
 while

while on the Character of that *Incomparable Lady*, whose Death we lament; by uniting, as well as I am able, the scatter'd Parts of it, and recalling to Your Thoughts at once the several Excellencies and Perfections of which it was compos'd: which made her belov'd and reverenc'd by You while Living, and will make her Memory ever Dear and Desirable to You, now she is Dead; and which rais'd her above the greatest Part of her Sex, much more than any Outward Marks of Rank and Distinction.

It is now, after her Disease, a fit time to speak of her in those Terms of Respect which she deserv'd: for in her Life-time she would not suffer it, and took some Pains to avoid it; hiding as many of her Virtues as she could from Publick Observation, and so behaving herself in the Practice of those she could not hide, as shew'd, she had no mind to be told of them: discountenancing, as far as lay in her Power, that odious and designing Flattery, which, through the wicked Fashion of an Insincere World, is now thought

SER M. thought to be a kind of Customary Debt
 VI. due to her Sex, and almost a necessary
 Part of good Breeding.

But though the Living can seldom be prais'd with Decency, yet the Dead certainly often may; especially such of the Dead, as had a very unusual Degree of Indifference and Unconcernedness for what was said to their Advantage, while they were Living.

There is a publick Homage due to Desert, if we take a proper Season of paying it; and the Ministers of the Gospel, who are entrusted with so many Methods of promoting Piety in the World, are, among the rest, entrusted with This, of *giving Honour where Honour is due*; and of truly representing to the Minds of Men such shining Patterns of Virtue, as are most likely to engage their Attention, and provoke their Imitation: It is our immediate and particular Employment to praise God; and it doth, no doubt, in some measure also belong to us, to praise those that are Like him.

And

And now how shall I enter upon this SERM.
fruitful Argument? What Particular of VI.
her comprehensive Character shall I first
chuse to insist on? Let us determine our
selves to begin there where she always
began, at her Devotions. In These she
was very Punctual and Regular: Morn-
ing and Evening came not up more con-
stantly in their Course, than her stated
Hours of Private Prayer; which she ob-
serv'd not formally, as a Task, but re-
turn'd to them always with Desire, De-
light, and Eagerness. She would on no
Occasion dispense with herself from pay-
ing this Duty: no Business, no common
Accident of Life could divert her from
it: She esteem'd it her great Honour
and Happiness, to attend upon God;
and she resolv'd to find Leisure for That,
for whatever else she might want it.

How she behav'd her self in these Se-
cret Transactions, between God and her
own Soul, is known to Him alone whom
She worshipp'd: But, if we may guess
at her Privacies by what was seen of her
in Publick, we may be sure, that she was
full

S E R M. full of Humility, Devotion, and Fervency; for so she remarkably was always, during the time of Divine Service. Her Behaviour was then very devout and solemn, and yet the most decent, easy, and unaffected, that could be; there was nothing in it either negligent and loose, or extravagant and strain'd: it was throughout such, as declar'd it self not to be the work of the Passions, but to flow from the Understanding, and from a clear Knowledge of the true Grounds and Principles of that her reasonable Service.

This Knowledge she attain'd by early Instructions, by much Reading, and Meditation, (to which she appear'd from her Childhood to be addicted) and, give me leave to add, by a very diligent and exact Attendance on the Lessons of Piety which were utter'd from the Pulpit; which no one practis'd better, because no one delighted in, listen'd to, or consider'd more. For, at these Performances, she was all Attention, all Ear; she kept her Heart fix'd and intent on its holy Work, by keeping her Eye from wandring.

It

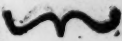
It was her Misfortune indeed, that the SERM.
Exemplariness of her Behaviour call'd off VI.
the Eyes of several to observe it; but
more Her, and Their Misfortune, that,
when they had seen it, and satisfy'd their
Curiosity, they did not go on also to
imitate it. She often express'd her Dis-
satisfaction at that Indecency of Car-
riage which universally prevails in our
Churches; and wonder'd that They
should be most careless of their Beha-
viour towards God, who are most scru-
pulously nice in exacting and paying all
the little Decencies that are in Use a-
mong Men.

When the Bread of Life was distri-
buted, she was sure to be there, a devout
and never-failing Communicant; and
the Strictness of her Attention, and the
Reverence of her Behaviour were, if it
were possible, rais'd and improv'd on
those Occasions: The lively Image of a
crucify'd Saviour, then exhibited, could
not but make very moving Impressions
on a Mind that abounded with so much
pious Warmth and Tendernefs.

SERM. Books she took Pleasure in, and made
 VI. good Use of; chiefly Books of Divinity,
 and Devotion; which she studied, and re-
 lished above all others. History too had
 very often a Share in her Reflections; and
 sometimes she look'd into Pieces of pure
 Diversion and Amusement; whenever
 she found them written in such a Way,
 as to be innocently entertaining. I need
 not tell You, to how narrow a Choice
 she was, by this means, confin'd.

But of all Books, the Book of God
 was That, in which she was most de-
 lighted and employ'd; and which was
 never, for any considerable time, out of
 her Hands. No doubt, she knew, and
 felt the great Use and sweet Influence
 of it, in calming her Mind, and regu-
 lating her Desires, and lifting up her
 Thoughts towards Heaven, in feeding
 and spreading that Holy Flame, which
 the Love of God had kindled in her
 Heart, and which she took care, by this
 means, to keep perpetually burning.

When she met with any thing there,
 or in any other pious Book, which would
 be

be of remarkable Use to her in the Con-SERM.
duct of her Life and Affairs, she trusted VI.
not her Memory with it; not even that 
excellent Memory, which she safely trust-
ed with Things of lesser Moment; but
immediately committed it to Writing.
Many Observations of this kind she hath
left, drawn from good Authors, but
chiefly from those Sacred Pages; in col-
lecting which, whether her Judgment,
or her Piety had the largest Share, it is
not easy to say.

The Passages of Holy Writ which she
took notice of, were indeed commonly
such, as related either to the Concerns
of her Spiritual Estate, or to Matters of
Prudence: but it appears also that she
spent some time in meditating on those
Places where the Sublimeſt Points of
Christian Doctrine are contain'd, and in
possessing her self with a deep Sense of
the wonderful Love of God towards us,
manifested in the mysterious Work of
our Redemption; for she had something
more than what, in the Language of
this loose Age, is call'd, *a Lady's Reli-*
gion.

SERM. *gion.* She endeavour'd to understand the
 VI. great Articles of Faith, as well as to
 practise the good Rules of Life, contain'd
 in the Gospel ; and she sensibly found,
 that the best way to excite her self to
 the Practice of the one, was to endeavour
 to understand the other.

And in this Book of God she was more
 particularly conversant on God's Day ; a
 Day ever held sacred by her, and which,
 therefore, always in her Family wore a
 Face of Devotion suitable to the Dignity
 of it. It was truly a Day of Rest to all
 under her Roof : her Servants were then
 dismiss'd from a good part of their Attendance
 upon her, that they might be at Liberty
 to attend on their great Lord and Master,
 whom both She, and They, were equally bound
 to obey. There was such a Silence and Solemnity
 at that time observ'd by all about her, as might
 have become the *House of Mourning* ; and yet so
 much Ease and Serenity visible in their Looks
 (at least in her Looks there was) as shew'd,
 that They, who were in the *House of Feasting*,
 were not better satisfi'd.

risfy'd. Thus did she prepare and dis-^{SERM.}
pose herself for the Enjoyment of that ^{VI.}
perfect Rest, the Celebration of that end-
less Sabbath, which she is now enter'd
upon; thus did she practise beforehand
upon Earth, the Duties, the Devotions,
the Customs, and Manners of Heaven.

To secure her Proficiency in Virtue;
she kept an exact Journal of her Life; in
which was contain'd the History of all
her Spiritual Affairs, and of the several
Turns that happen'd in her Soul: A
true, naked, impartial History! and yet,
(which seldom happens in true ones)
such an one, where the Person describ'd
is not charg'd with many Blemishes and
Failings. Alas for Us, that the Thread
of it was no longer continu'd!

In this Glass she every day dress'd her
Mind, to this faithful Monitor she re-
pair'd for Advice and Direction; com-
par'd the past with the present, judg'd of
what would be, by what had been, ob-
serv'd nicely the several successive De-
grees of Holiness she got, and of Hu-
man Infirmary she shook off; and trac'd

SERM. every single Step she took onward in her

VI. Way towards Heaven.

One would have imagin'd, that so much Exactness and Severity in private should have affected a little her publick Actions and Discourses, and have slid insensibly into her Carriage; and yet nothing could be more free, simple, and natural. She had the Reality, without the Outside and Shew of Strictness: all her Rules, all her Performances sat so well and graceful upon her, that they appear'd to be as much her Pleasure as her Duty; She was, in the midst of them, perfectly easy to her self, and a Delight to all that were about her: ever Chearful in her Behaviour, but withal ever Calm and Even; her Satisfaction, like a deep untroubled Stream, ran on, without any of that Violence, or Noise, which sometimes the shallowest Pleasures do most abound in.

However, Chearful and Agreeable as she was, yet she never carried her good Humour so far, as to smile at a Prophane, and Ill-natur'd, or an Unmannerly Jest;
on

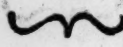
on the contrary, in her highest Mirth, it SERM.
made her remarkably Grave and Serious. VI.

She had an extraordinary Nicety of Temper as to all the least Approaches to Faults of that kind, and shew'd a very quick and sensible Concern at any thing which she thought it did not become either Her to hear, or others to say.

True Piety, which consists chiefly in an Humility and Submission of Mind towards God, is attended always with Humility and Goodness towards his Creatures; and so it was in this *Excellent Lady*. Never was there a more deep, and unfeign'd, and artless Lowliness of Mind seen in her Rank and Station: As far as she was plac'd above the most of the World, she convers'd as it were upon the Level with all of them; and yet, when she stooped the lowest towards them, she took care even at that time to preserve the Respect that was due to her from them. She had so much true Merit, that she was not afraid of being look'd into, and therefore durst be familiar: And the Effect of that Familiarity

SERM. was, that, by being better known, she

VI. was more lov'd and valu'd. Not only

 No one of her Inferiors ever came uneasy from her, (as hath been said of some Great Ones;) but no one ever went uneasy to her; so assured were all beforehand of her Sweetness of Temper, and obliging Reception! When she open'd her Lips, Gracious Words always proceeded from thence, and *in her Tongue was the Law of Kindness*. Her Reservedness, and Love of Privacy, might possibly be misinterpreted sometimes for an Over-value of herself, by those who did not know her; but the least Degree of Acquaintance made all those Suspicions vanish. For, tho' her Perfections both of Body and Mind were very extraordinary, yet she was the only Person that seem'd, without any Endeavour to seem, insensible of them. She was, 'tis true, in as much Danger of being Vain, as great Beauty, and a good Natural Wit could make her: But she had such an Over-balance of Discretion, that she was never in Pain to have the one seen, or the

the other heard. Indeed, This was parti-
 cular to her, and a very distinguishing Part
 of her Character, that she never studied
 Appearances, nor made any Advances to-
 wards the Opinion of the World; being
 contented to *be* whatever was Good or
 Deserving, without endeavouring in the
 least to be *thought* so : and this, not out of
 any affected Disregard to Publick Esteem,
 but merely from a Modesty and Easiness
 of Nature, which made her give way to
 others, who were more willing to be ob-
 serv'd. And yet she had also her Hours
 of Openness and Freedom, when her Soul
 eas'd it self to Familiars and Friends; and
 then *out of the good Treasure of her Heart*
 what *good things* did she *bring forth*?
 And with what Delight was she listned to
 by those who had the Happiness to con-
 verse with her? So that a Doubt it is,
 whether she were most to be admired
 for what she did, or for what she did
 not say. It was wonderful that One,
 who, when she pleas'd, could discourse
 so fitly and so freely, should yet chuse
 to be silent on so many Occasions; and

SERM. it was surprizing that She, who was
VI. such a Lover of Silence, should, whenever she spake, charm all that heard her.

We may be sure, that, whilst she thus commanded her Tongue, she kept as strict and watchful a Guard upon her Passions; those especially of the Rough and Troublesome kind, with which she was scarce ever seen to be disquieted. She knew not what the Disorders of Anger were, even on Occasions that might seem to justify, if not to require it: As much as she hated Vice, she chose rather to look it out of Countenance, than to be severe against it; and to win the bad over to the Side of Virtue by her Example, than by her Rebukes.

Her sweet Deportment toward Those who were with her, could be outdone by nothing but her Tenderness in relation to the Absent; whom she was sure to think, and speak as well of as was possible: And when their Character was plainly such, as could have no good Colours put upon it, yet she would shew her
her

her Dislike of it no otherwise than by S E R M.
saying nothing of them. Neither her VI.
Good-Nature, nor her Religion, neither
her Civility, nor her Prudence, would
suffer her to censure any one: She thought
she had enough to do at home, in that
way, without looking much abroad;
and therefore turn'd the Edge of all her
Reflections upon her self. Indeed she
spar'd others as much as if she had been
afraid of them, and herself as little, as if
she had had many Faults that wanted
mending: And yet, 'twas because she
could, after the severest Scrutiny, find no
great Harm in her self, that she could
scarce be brought to suspect any in others.

Her Conversation might, for this Reason, seem to want somewhat of that Salt and Smartness, which the ill-natur'd Part of the World are so fond of; a Want, that she could easily have supply'd, would her Principles have given her leave: but her settled Opinion was, that the Good Name of any one was too nice and serious a thing to be play'd with; and that it was a foolish kind of Mirth, which, in

SERM. order to divert some, hurt others. She

VI. could never bring her self to think, that the only thing which gave Life and Spirit to Discourse, was, to have Somebody's Faults the Subject of it; or, that the Pleasure of a Visit lay, in giving up the Company to one another's Sport and Malice, by turns. And if these are the chief Marks of Wit and Good-breeding, it must be confess'd that she had neither.

With all this Goodness, Gentleness, and Meekness of Nature, she had at the same time a Degree of Spirit and Firmness, unusual in her Sex; and was particularly observ'd to have a wonderful Presence of Mind in any Accident of Danger: for Innocence and Courage are nearly ally'd, and even in the softest Tempers, where the one of these is in Perfection, there will and must be a good Degree of the other.

Shall I say any thing of that innate Modesty of Temper, and spotless Purity of Heart, which shone throughout her whole Life and Conversation? A Quality so strictly requir'd of her Sex, that it may
be

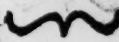
be thought not so properly commendable SERM.
 in any of them to have it, as infamous VI.
 to want it. However, in the most com-
 mon and ordinary Graces, there are un-
 common Heights and Degrees; and it
 was the particular Happiness of this *Lady*
 Remarkably to excel in every Virtue that
 belong'd to her; even in those, in which
 Christians of the lowest Attainments do
 in some degree Excel.

Shall I add, that this Love of Purity
 was the Cause, why she banish'd her self
 from those Publick Diversions of the
 Town, at which it was scarce possible
 to be present, without hearing somewhat
 that wounded chaste Ears; and for which,
 she thought, no Amends could be made
 to Virtue by any degree of Wit, or Hu-
 mour, with which, perhaps, they might
 otherwise abound? These Good Quali-
 ties, she knew, serv'd only to recom-
 mend the Poison, and make it palatable;
 and, therefore, she thought it a piece of
 Service to other People, (who might per-
 haps be influenc'd by her Example) to
 stand off, tho' she her self were secur'd
from

SERM. from the Infection. This, questionless,

VI. was One Reason of her allowing her
self in those dangerous Entertainments so sparingly; but it was but One of Many: She had really neither Relish nor Leisure for them; nor for a thousand other things, which the World miscals Pleasures. Not that she wanted naturally a Taste for any thing of this kind; for her Apprehension was fine, and her Wit very good, and very ready at Command, whenever she pleas'd to exercise it: but she had turn'd her Thoughts so much towards Things of Use and Importance, that Matters of mere Pleasure grew flat and indifferent to her; She was so taken up with the Care of improving her Understanding, and bettering her Life, in the Discharge of the Offices necessary to her Rank, in the Duties of her Closet, and the Concerns of her Family, that, she found, at the Foot of the Account, but little Time (and had less Mind) to give in to those vain Amusements.

She did not think it (as, I fear, it is too often thought) the peculiar Happiness

ness and Privilege of the Great, to have SERM.
nothing to do; but took care to fill every VI.
Vacant Minute of her Life with some 
useful or innocent Employment. The
several Hours of the Day had their pecu-
liar Business allotted to them, (whether
it were Conversation, or Work, Read-
ing, or Domestick Affairs) each of which
came up orderly in its turn; and was,
as the Wise Man speaks, (to be sure, un-
der Her Management it was) *beautiful*
in its Season.

And this Regularity of Hers, was free
and natural, without Formality or Con-
straint; it was neither troublesome to
Her, nor to those that were near her:
when, therefore, any Accident interven'd,
it was interrupted at that time with as
much Ease as it was at other times prac-
tis'd: for among all her discretionary
Rules, the chief was, to seem to have
none; and to make those she had laid
down to her self give way always to
Circumstances and Occasions.

She wrought with her own Hands of-
ten, when she could more profitably, and
pleas-

S E R M. pleasingly have employ'd her time in Meditation, or Books: but she was willing
 VI. to set an Example to those, who could not; and she took care, therefore, that her Example should be well follow'd by all that were under her immediate Influence: for she knew well, that the Description of a Good Wife and a Perfect Woman in the *Proverbs*, (a Description which she much delighted in, and often read) was spent chiefly in commending that Diligence by which *She looketh well to the Ways of her Household, and eateth not the Bread of Idleness*: And she knew likewise also, that the Person, whose Words these are said to be, was no less a Woman than the Mother of King *Lemuel*.

Diligence and Frugality are Sisters: and She, therefore, who was so well acquainted with the one, was not likely to be a Stranger to the other. She was strictly careful of her Expences; and yet knew how to be Generous and to abound, when the Occasion requir'd it. But of all Ways of good Management, she lik'd That the worst which shuts our Hands to the Poor;

towards whom she always shew'd herself SERM.
 very Compassionate and Charitable. Of VI.
 the other Delights, with which an high 
 Fortune furnish'd her, she was almost in-
 sensible; but on This account she valu'd it,
 that it gave her an Opportunity of pur-
 suing the several Pleasures of Beneficence,
 and of tasting all the Sweets of Well-
 doing. *She deliver'd the Poor that*
cry'd, and the Fatherless, and Him that
had none to help him: The Blessing of
him that was ready to perish came upon
her, and She caus'd the Widow's Heart
to sing. Very easy, sure, will this make
 her Audit at the great Day of Account;
 That Charity will, doubtless, be allow'd
 to screen her few Infirmities and Faults,
 which is of Efficacy sufficient to *cover*
the Multitude of Sins.

In the Exercise of this, and of all other
 Virtues, She was wonderfully secret;
 endeavouring to come up, as near as she
 could, to the Rule of *not letting her*
right Hand know what her left Hand
did. And this Secrecy of hers she ma-
 naged so well, that some of the most
 remark-

SERM. remarkable Instances of her Goodness

VI. were not known, till after her Death;
 no, not by Him, who was Partaker of
 all her Joys and Sorrows.

Retirement and Privacy she always lov'd, and therefore chose it, when, after the Death of a near Relation, who had the Care of Educating Her, she was at liberty to have liv'd otherwise. From that Time to her Marriage, which was more than Three Years, she hid her self in the Country; having an early and settled Aversion to the Noise and Inconveniences of a Town-life; and too little an Opinion of her self, to think, that it was so much the Interest of Virtue and Religion, as it really was, that she should be known and distinguish'd.

When, afterwards, she went to Court, (as it was necessary for Her sometimes to do) she did it with an Air, which plainly shew'd, that she went to pay her Duty there, and not to delight her self in the Pomp and Glitter of that Place. Had she gone thither soon enough to see that *Good and Glorious Queen*, who was the

Ornament of It, and of her Sex, she had SERM.
been taken, we may presume, into her VI.
Intimacy: for their Minds were nearly
ally'd, and their Characters, and Man-
ners, and Ways of Life not unlike; al-
lowing for the Difference of Stations.

I need not, I cannot well say more of
her: and if, therefore, I have fallen short
of her Character, (as I am sensible I have,
in many Parts of it, which are here men-
tion'd, and in others, which are still left
untouch'd) I desire, those particular De-
fects may be supply'd from this General
Account; that she did not a little re-
semble *Her*, who was the Pattern of all
that is Good and Amiable in Woman-
kind.

Whether she had this excellent Pat-
tern in her Eye, I am not able to say,
when, soon after her Marriage, she de-
clar'd to several Friends her Thoughts,
that Every Woman of Quality was as
much more Oblig'd, as she was more
Enabled than other Women, to do Good
in the World; and that the shortest and
surest Way of doing this was, to endea-
your,

SERM. your, by all means, to be as good a Christian, and as good a Wife, and as good a Friend, as was possible.

She endeavour'd to be all this, and she fell not far short of it: for she excel'd in all the Characters that belong'd to her, and was in a great measure equal to all the Obligations that she lay under: She was devout, without Superstition; strict, without Ill-humour; good-natur'd, without Weakness; chearful, without Levity; regular, without Affectation. She was, to her Husband, the best of Wives, the most agreeable of Companions, and most faithful of Friends; to her Servants, the best of Mistresses; to her Relations, extremely respectful; to her Inferiors, very obliging: and by all that knew her, either nearly, or at a Distance, She was reckon'd, and confess'd to be one of the best of Women.

And yet all this Goodness, and all this Excellence, was bounded within the Compass of eighteen Years, and as many Days: for no longer was she allow'd to live among us. She was snatch'd out of the

the World as soon almost as she had SERM.
made her Appearance in it; like a Jewel VI.
of high Price, just shewn a little, and then
put up again; and We were depriv'd of
her by that time We had learnt to value
her. But Circles may be compleat, tho'
small; the Perfection of Life doth not
consist in the Length of it: if it did, Our
Saviour to be sure would not have dy'd
so soon after thirty.

Short as her Life was, She had time
enough to adorn the several States of Vir-
ginity and Marriage; and to experience
the Sadness of a kind of Widowhood too:
for such she accounted it, when her Lord
was long absent from her; mourn'd as
much, and refus'd as much to be com-
forted, till his Return.

As her Life was short, so her Death
was sudden; She was call'd away in haste,
and without any warning. One day she
droop'd, and the next she dy'd; nor was
there the Distance of many Hours be-
tween her being very easy in this World,
and very happy in another.

SERM. However, tho' She was seiz'd thus sud-

VI. denly by Death, yet was she not surpriz'd; for She was ever in Preparation for it; *her Loins girt*, (as the Scripture speaks) *and her Lamp ready trimm'd, and burning*: The Moment also that She was taken ill, she was just risen from her Knees, and had made an end of her Morning Devotions. And to such an One a sudden Death could be no Misfortune. We pray, indeed, against it, because few, very few, are fit for it; and the Church is to proportion her Forms to the Generality of Christians: But where a Good Soul is in perfect Readiness, there the sooner the fatal Stroke is struck, the better; all Delays in this Case, are uncomfortable to the Dying, as well as to those Friends who survive them.

In truth, she could not be call'd away more hastily, than she was willing to go. She had been us'd so much to have *her Conversation in Heaven*, and her Soul had been so often upon the wing thither, that it readily left its Earthly Station upon the least Notice from Above; and took the

the very first Opportunity of quitting her ^{SERM.}
Body, without lingring or expecting a ^{VI.}
second Summons. She stay'd no longer,
after she was call'd, than to assure her
Lord of her entire Resignation to the Di-
vine Will; and of her having no manner
of Uneasiness upon her Mind; and to take
her Leave of him, with all the Expressi-
ons of Tenderness. When this was over,
she had nothing more to do with her Sen-
ses; she sunk immediately under her Ill-
ness, and, after a short unquiet Slumber,
slept in Peace.

Thus liv'd, and thus dy'd this Excel-
lent Lady, whose Character I have so far
represented, as my Time, and the Mea-
sure of such Discourses as these would
suffer me; and endeavour'd to renew a
faint Image of her several Virtues and
Perfections upon your Minds. I have
done it in a confus'd manner, and with-
out the nice Divisions of Art; for Grief
is not Methodical: It is enough, if I have
been able to set before you some Resem-
blance of her, tho' I should not have done
it after the best and liveliest manner:

Q 2

When

SERM. When the Life is gone, a Picture drawn
 VI. even by an unskilful Hand, hath its Use
 and Value ; and those who lov'd what
 it doth (however unequally) represent,
 will be touch'd at the sight of it.

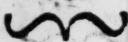
You all are so, I question not, touch'd,
 by what hath been said, in various Man-
 ners, and in different Degrees, as Your
 Relation to her was nearer, or remoter ;
 as you knew more, or less of her. But you
 do not mourn alone ; many *Living* there
 are, that do now, and many more there
 are, who shall hereafter, when her Cha-
 racter hath spread it self, *lay it to heart*.
 The World hath had a Loss, as well as
 You ; True Virtue and Piety have suf-
 fer'd in her Fall ; and all, therefore, that
 have any Regard for These, shall bear a
 Part with You in your Sorrows.

The *True Servants of God* shall *lay it*
to heart, who from their Souls desire the
 Increase of Religion and Goodness, and
 know the Power and Influence of so
 sweet, so winning, so perfect a Pattern
 as was set by Her ; who promis'd Them-
 selves a mighty Countenance, and the
 World

World strange Advantages, from her ex-SER M.
emplary Sanctity and Goodness. VI.

They that *minister in holy Things* will lay it to heart, to whom she repair'd, with so much Constancy and Seriousness, to hear the Divine Oracles explained by them, and to *enquire the Law at their Mouths*. They will consider, what an Helper and Furtherer of their pious Labours they have lost; and how much more lifeless and ineffectual their Discourses are now likely to be, than they were heretofore, when she encouraged those Exercises by her Presence, and taught others to attend, by the strict Attention she her self paid to what was said in them. In whatever Congregation she appear'd, she secretly rais'd and improv'd the Devotions of the Place; every Day of her Life preach'd up Goodness, as effectually as the most rational and moving Sermon.

The *Enquirers into the Methods and Mysteries of Divine Providence* will lay it to heart. Why, will they say, when God hath most Work to do in the World,

SERM. one of the best and most faithful Instru-
 VI.  ments of his Glory call'd out of it? Why
 is she snatch'd away from us, at a Time
 when we could least have spar'd her? when Iniquity and Irreligion run high, and Piety is in danger of growing out of Fashion, and out of Countenance? Why, in such a Juncture, is this *Good Lady* taken? And why are so many of her Sex, so unlike her, left? Is it in Mercy to her, or in Judgment to Us? Is it because She was too good to live here, or because We were too wicked to deserve her Company? *Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when we plead with Thee: yet let Us talk with Thee of thy Judgments!*

Her *Domestics* will lay it to heart, whom She shone upon always with a singular Goodness; who were near Witnesses of her most retir'd Graces and Virtues; and had the best Opportunities of forming themselves upon her admirable Model: and who will now (alas!) be destitute of her Example and Encouragement; of her sweet Advice, and gentle Reproofs; and will be left to live upon that Stock of
 Virtue,

Virtue, which hath been happily laid in S E R M.
by them, that Measure of Goodness which VI.
They have already deriv'd, from attend-
ing and observing Her.

Finally, the *Poor* will *lay it to heart*,
whose Bowels she refresh'd, and whose
Wants she reliev'd; and was ever their
sure Refuge and Support, their Kind and
Merciful Patroness and Friend.

But, above all, her *Relations* will *lay it
to heart*; Those, to whom she was most
nearly join'd by Blood, or Love; and
who had a more particular Interest in all
her Virtues: They will lay their Hands
on their Breasts, *in the Day of Adversity*,
and *consider*; how have we offended, that
we are thus grievously punished? and
which of Our Miscarriages is it, that this
heavy Infliction is intended to reform?

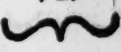
This is the wisest and best Use that can
be made of such Solemnities as these;
not, by the means of them, to excite our
truly pious and Christian Grief to an im-
moderate and unchristian Degree, nor *to
sorrow as Men without hope*; but to take
Occasion from thence, to search and en-

SERM. quire into our selves; to learn the Meaning of these Divine Admonitions; and, after we have interpreted them truly, to resolve upon obeying them.

VI.

The Deceas'd Person, whose Loss we deplore, is Happy without Question: Happy will the Living be also, if they thus wisely, thus effectually *lay it to heart!* *It is better, doubtless, to go into the House of Mourning, than into the House of Feasting;* but upon this Condition, that we come better out of the one, than out of the other: That we leave our Vanities and our Vices behind us; that we lay aside our Affections towards this World, and our Indifference towards another; that we put on holy and hearty Resolutions of being even Now, what we shall wish we had been, Hereafter, when the fatal Hour approaches; and of *living the Life* of this *Righteous* Person, that we may *die her Death* too; and be remember'd and lamented, as she is, by those who survive us.

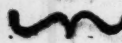
Let us assure ourselves, that the best way of doing Honour to her Memory will be,

be, by making her Character still live in S E R M.
 Our Lives and Actions; that the truest in- VI.
 stance of our Love and Esteem of Her is, 
 to endeavour to be Like Her: for Thus,
 we shall even add some farther Degrees
 of Happiness and Honour to the vast Re-
 ward which she is already entitled to; and
 shall make the Crown of Glory, she is to
 wear, bright as it will be, yet brighter, in
 the Day of General Retribution: Till
 when, (it may be piously suppos'd) the
 Saints departed are not admitted to the
Fulness of Joy, that, in the mean time,
 the Influence of their good Examples and
 good Deeds spreading far and wide, That
 too, when their Accounts are made up,
 may be taken into them; and the Fitness
 and Proportionableness of their exceeding
 great Recompence, then bestow'd, may be
 manifested in the Sight of Angels and Men.

Wherefore, *lift up the Hands that hang
 down, and the feeble Knees!* Think not
 so much and so long on the incomparable
 Character of the Deceas'd, as to forget the
 true Use You are to make of this afflicting
 Accident; and to neglect those good Im-
 provements

S E R M. provements under it, which the Wise and

VI. Kind Inflicter expects at Your Hands. You

 have paid Your last Respects to Her, be not now wanting to Your selves; but *Gird up the Loins of Your Mind*, and be Ye comforted!

The Consideration of what She was, which Afflicts You, should much rather Chear and Revive You: Had She not been so good a Woman, You would with more reason have bewail'd her. But, why should You continue to mourn for One, who is enter'd upon a state of unspeakable Joy? Why should you be dejected at Her Advancement?

She is gone to the place, where all Tears are wip'd from her Eyes; where there is no more Death, nor Sorrow, nor Crying: She is gone, and her Works have follow'd, and will follow her, to her great and Endless Advantage. God grant that, when We also follow her, we may do it with as little Surprize, and as much Chearfulness!

To Him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Honour, Adoration and Thanks, now, and for ever! Amen.

The

*The Wisdom of Providence manifested in
the Revolutions of Government.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable
House of C O M M O N S

A T
St. Margaret's Westminster,

May the 29th, 1701.

Being the Anniversary for the Restora-
tion of King **C H A R L E S** the
Second.

E Z E K. xxxvii. 3.

*And he said unto me, Son of Man, can
these Bones live? And I answered, O
Lord God, thou knowest.*

TH E S E words are part of that Vi-SERMON
sion of the *Valley of Bones*, where-^{VII.}
in the Prophet *Ezekiel* doth, in a very
lofty

S E R M. lofty and lively manner, set out the Lost
 VII. and Hopeless state of *Israel*, then under
 ~~~~~ Captivity; and their future Recovery out  
 of it, by the immediate Interposition of  
 a Divine Power, contrary to all Human  
 Probability and Appearance.

*The Hand of the Lord was upon me,*  
 (says he, at the Entrance of this Chapter)  
*and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord,*  
*and set me down in the midst of a Valley*  
*which was full of Bones: i. e. the Spirit*  
 of God represented to my Imagination  
 such a Sight: *And (as he goes on) caused*  
*me to pass by them round about; and, be-*  
*hold, there were Many in the open Valley,*  
*and, lo! they were very Dry: i. e. they*  
 were as numerous as the Dispers'd of *Israel*  
 in the Plains of *Mesopotamia*, and as desti-  
 tute of lively Juice and Moisture, as that  
 Exil'd People were of all hopes of Return-  
 ing. *And he said unto me, Son of Man,*  
*can these Bones live? And I answered, O*  
*Lord God, thou knowest: i. e. Thou, that*  
 art the Author and Bestower of Life, canst  
 doubtless restore it also, if thou wilt;  
 and when thou wilt; but whether thou  
 willst

will't please to restore it, or not, That SERM.  
Thou alone knowest. After which, the VII.  
Spirit commands him to *Prophecy upon*  
*those Bones*, and to say, *O ye dry Bones,*  
*hear the Word of the Lord*, together with  
what follows, in the two next Verses.  
*And as I prophesied* (continued he) *there*  
*was a noise, and behold a shaking; and*  
*the Bones came together, Bone to his Bone:*  
*And—lo! the Sinews and the Flesh came*  
*upon them, and the Skin cover'd them a-*  
*bove: And at last, the Breath also came*  
*into them, and they lived, and stood up*  
*upon their Feet, an exceeding great Army.*  
Where we have, in the Prophetick way,  
an Assurance given to the *Jews*, that,  
though their Polity was now dissolv'd,  
and their Tribes dispers'd, yet the time  
was coming, when the Providence of  
God would, in a wonderful manner,  
work out their Deliverance and Return;  
re-unite the several parts of their shat-  
ter'd Frame, and make that People  
live together once again under their  
own Laws, and in their own Coun-  
try. 'Tis true, this Vision hath, by  
some



SERM. some of the Antients, been understood of

VII. *the General Resurrection*; and by others, *of the General Restoration of the Jews* before the Second Coming of Christ; and perhaps Both these Great Transactions might be glanc'd at in it, and remotely intended by it: For the Predictions of Scripture are generally so contriv'd, as to extend to more than one Event; so, as to be fulfil'd at several Times, by several Steps and Degrees of Accomplishment. However, That, which the Prophet had chiefly and most nearly in his View, was, the Recovery of the *Jewish* State from the Captivity which it then groan'd under; and to That therefore the Vision is, at the close of it, expressly applied: *Son of man, these Bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts: therefore, Prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*

The

The words of the Text, therefore, when S E R M.  
taken together with the other parts of VII.  
the Prophecy, to which they belong, carry in them this Consideration, “ That  
“ God doth sometimes interpose in be-  
“ half of lost States and Kingdoms, and  
“ delights to manifest his Power and  
“ Providence, in retrieving them from  
“ Ruin, when they are as incapable of  
“ Restitution by all Human means, as  
“ dead and dry Bones are of recovering  
“ their Vital Juice, and being compact-  
“ ed again into a living Body.” A Sub-  
ject, fit every way to employ our  
Thoughts, at a Time, in which we are  
call’d upon to commemorate a *Revoluti-*  
*on*, as surprizing in its Manner, as happy  
in its Consequences, as full every way of  
Wonder, and of all the Marks of a Di-  
vine Contrivance, as any Age, or Coun-  
try, (even this Country it self, which  
hath experienced so many and great Vi-  
cissitudes) can shew ; and which, tho’  
plac’d in our Annals at some Distance  
from us, cannot yet be forgotten by us,  
as long as we feel the Influence, and reap

SERM. the Benefits of it; that is, as long as Re-  
 VII. gal Government, and the free use of Par-  
 liaments, the Profession of God's pure Re-  
 ligion, and the Enjoyment of our Ancient  
 Laws and Liberties shall continue among  
 us: And, if it can be forgotten with the  
 Loss of These only, there is no good *Eng-  
 lishman* but will say, may the Memory  
 of it always flourish!

Give me leave, therefore, to lay be-  
 fore you some Thoughts concerning the  
 Wisdom of Divine Providence, in inter-  
 posing so particularly to bring about these  
 mighty unexpected Turns of State; which  
 it doth, doubtless, for many Wise Rea-  
 sons, known only to that Infinite Mind  
 which Steers the Course of such great  
 Actions: However, some there are, that  
 lie open even to our narrow Apprehen-  
 sions. And,

1. The Providence of God concerns it  
 self in producing such surprizing Events,  
 in order to have its Influence on things  
 below observ'd and acknowledg'd; which  
 would go near to be forgotten, did he  
 not,



not, by some remarkable Instances of his S E R M.  
interposition in Human Affairs, raise Men VII.  
up at fit times, into a lively and vigorous  
Sense of it. Though we know, that we  
Live, Move, and have our Being in God,  
that we are supported every moment by  
his Power, and conducted in all our Acti-  
ons by his Unerring Wisdom and Good-  
ness; yet the Impression which this  
Knowledge makes upon our Minds, is but  
faint, and is quickly effac'd. His Con-  
curring Influences in this Case are so se-  
cret, and so difficult to be distinguish'd  
from the working of Natural and Moral  
Causes, that we are too apt to rest in the  
Contemplation of these, without any re-  
course to those; and to resolve all that  
happens to us, in our Own Concerns, in-  
to the Power of such Principles as lie  
nearest to us. And, even in the greater  
and more Publick Transactions of the  
World, when they go on in such a man-  
ner, as to look like the effects of Human  
Foresight and Contrivance, we are apt to  
stop short in our Reflections upon them,  
without carrying our Thoughts up to

SERM. that invisible Hand, which wields the

VII. vast Machine, and directs all its Springs  
 and Motions, *Since the Fathers fell asleep,*  
 2 Pet. iii. 4.

said the Scoffers in St. Peter, *all things continue as they were*; and they were ready to infer, therefore, that all things went on of themselves, without a Superior Power to Influence, or Controul them. But, when the great Scene of Government is shifted all at once, and the Causes, that Visibly contribute to the production of this Effect, bear no proportion to it; then we look out for others of a more extended Force; we perceive a Divine Providence interesting itself in our Affairs, and adore the footsteps of it. When these National Judgments, or Mercies of God, are *abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of it will learn righteousness*. And that Lesson of Divine Wisdom then learnt, will be apply'd by them to other Circumstances, and on far different Occasions. For, when once a true Principle of Piety, and of a Religious Dependence on God, is duly excited in us, it will operate beyond the particular Cause from whence it sprang,  
 and

and give a general Turn and Tendency to S E R M.  
all our Thoughts and Reflections; as One VII.  
wise Rule of Behaviour, deeply imbib'd,  
will be useful to us in hundreds of In-  
stances, and spread its Influence through-  
out the whole Course and Conduct of our  
Lives and Actions.

Since, therefore, we are so apt to for-  
get God's Administration of the great Af-  
fairs below, when they go on evenly and  
regularly, he is pleas'd, I say, by Awak-  
ning Notices, now and then to put us in  
mind of it; to present to our view some  
astonishing Revolution of State, like a  
Glaring Comet, hung up in the Air,  
whose extraordinary Appearance, and  
Irregular Motion, shall sooner lead our  
Thoughts up to the Author of Nature,  
and imprint a deeper Awe of him upon  
our Minds, than the Sight of the whole  
Host of Heaven, in Orderly Array con-  
tinually moving round us.

Indeed, since the Age of Miracles  
ceas'd, as it did, when the Testimony of  
the Gospel was fully Seal'd, the chief  
way, in which God hath been pleas'd to



SER M. give Extraordinary Indications of his

VII.

Power and Providence, hath been by such  
*Signs of the times*, such Wonders of Government as these; which were not calculated, like other Miracles, for any particular Purpose, or Period; but have been in the World as long as Kingdoms and Nations have been, and are to last together with them. And this suggests to us also, a

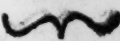
2<sup>d</sup> Reason of God's interposing so remarkably in the sudden Depressing or Advancing of Kingdoms and States, because this conduces to the Manifestation of his *Political* Justice, or of that Rule of Acting which he observes, as the Great Governor and Lord of the World, towards Publick Bodies and Communities of Men; and which is very different from that by which he Punishes the Sins, or Rewards the Virtues of Private Persons. The Justice of his dealing with Particular Men may be manifested here, or hereafter, as he thinks fit; for their Duration is Eternal: And should their  
 Success-

Successful Crimes, or Unmerited Afflic-<sup>SERM.</sup>  
tions be wink'd at in this World, it <sup>VII.</sup>  
suffices, if such Irregularities are set  
right in another. But, as to Societies, and  
Combinations of Men, which are of a  
shorter date, another Rule must take  
place ; they will at length be lost and  
swallow'd up in the Kingdom of the  
Lamb, and be made one Fold under one  
Shepherd, one People under one Lord,  
and Head, Christ Jesus : And, therefore,  
the Justice of God's Administration, in  
regard to such Communities, must be  
manifested either here, or not at all.  
For which Reason, I say, and that the  
Manifestation of it may be the more  
Glorious and Worthy of him, he some-  
times turns about the Affairs and For-  
tunes of States in a very wonderful man-  
ner, and makes himself to be known to  
be the *most High, that ruleth in the* <sup>Dan. iv. 17</sup>  
*Kingdoms of Men.*

And from this Notion of God's Go-  
verning, or Political Justice, we may  
give ourselves some account why Tem-  
poral Felicities and Calamities are so

SERM. often spoken of, and make such a Figure  
 VII. in the Writings of *Moses*, and the Prophets: For, under that Dispensation, God's Messengers addressed themselves to the *Jews* generally, as to a Nation, or Civil Body of Men; and stirr'd them up to Virtue, therefore, or dehorted them from Vice, by such Motives as were properly applicable to States and Communities. Whereas, in the Gospel, we meet but few Passages, or Instructions of this kind, the Precepts of it being chiefly design'd to improve the Morals, and regulate the Behaviour of Private Persons, and to advance their Virtue to a degree of Perfection, answerable in some measure to the Gracious Discoveries then first imparted to them. But, as to the Conduct of Societies, or of particular Members in relation to them, little is said; because the Doctrine of the Law, and the Prophets, was so full in that Point, that there was no need of repeating Lessons, there so often inculcated, and no room for improving upon them.

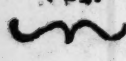


For this Reason, among others, may **S E R M.**  
we suppose, that the *Jews* were so re- **VII.**  
markably separated from other Nations,   
and kept so entire within themselves, by  
the expresse Commands of God, and by  
a Fence of many Peculiar Rites and Cere-  
monies; and that the History of the  
various and strange Vicissitudes they un-  
derwent, from their first Erection into a  
People, down to their final Excision, is  
so punctually registred and transmitted to  
us; that we might in Them, as in the  
Glass of Providence, (if I may so speak)  
distinctly see all the several Ways and  
Methods of God's dealing with great States  
and Kingdoms, and be fully instructed in  
the Rules of his raising, or depressing,  
prospering, or punishing them, by the  
Interposition of a Divine Power, as Vi-  
sible almost as the Virtues, or Vices, that  
occasioned it. But,

3<sup>dly</sup>, It may afford us a farther Ac-  
count of those Unexpected Turns of  
State, and Deliverances, which the Arm  
of God brings to pass, if we consider of

256 *The Wisdom of Providence manifested*

SERM. what use they are, to baffle the mista-

VII.  ken Policy of Men, and to discover the Vanity and Emptiness of all those Pretences to a deep and consummate Wisdom, which the falsely-wise of this World please themselves in, and value themselves upon.

Men of Ability and Experience in great Affairs, who have been long at the Helm, have hit oft, in their Conjectures upon things, and have been very Prosperous in many of their Projects, are apt at last to give themselves the Honour of all their Good Luck, and to grow vain upon it; saying proudly in their Heart, according to the Elegant Expressions of *Isaiah*, *By the strength of my Hand I have done it, and by my Wisdom, for I am prudent; and I have removed the Bounds of the People, and have robbed their Treasures, and I have put down their Inhabitants like a valiant Man. And my Hand hath found, as a Nest, the Riches of the People; and as one gathereth Eggs that are left, have I gathered all the Earth; and there was none that moved the Wing,*

or

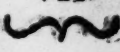
*Isaiah* x.  
13, 14.

or opened the Mouth, or peep'd. Thus they SERM.  
adore the goodly Scheme, by which they VII.  
brought all these things to pass, and  
reckon upon it as sure and infallible, for  
the future; when, nevertheless, it hath  
this one Terrible Defect, that God is  
left out of it: And, therefore, he gives  
them often a convincing Proof of the  
Folly of it, by unravelling all their Mea-  
sures at once, and blasting all their Un-  
dertakings, and bringing about a New  
Scene of things, through unheeded, un-  
suspected Methods, which they could not  
foresee with all their Skill, nor prevent by  
all their Prudence; that so *the Wise Man* Jer. ix.  
*may learn, not to glory in his Wisdom, and* <sup>23, 24.</sup>  
*the mighty Man not to glory in his Might:*  
*but he that glorieth may glory in this, that*  
*he understandeth, and knoweth Me; that*  
*I am the Lord, which exercise loving Kind-*  
*ness, Judgment, and Righteousness in the*  
*Earth; for in these things I delight, saith*  
*the Lord.* Were it not for such surprizing  
Revolutions of Affairs, which disappoint  
the Devices of these Crafty ones, and  
make the Heads of the Ablest and most  
Experi-



SER M. Experienc'd Lookers on, giddy at the  
 VII. sight, God would, in the opinion of many  
 of his Creatures, be shut out from the  
 Government of the World, and the Honour of his Conduct would be devolv'd upon some of the Mean and Subordinate Instruments of it; those poor Insects that sit upon the Wheels of State, and imagine themselves to be the Authors of all its Motions, and able to check, or to quicken them, at their Pleasure.

There is yet a (4th) good Use, to which these great National Changes are subservient, (those of them, especially, which carry a People at once from the extremity of Bad, to the height of Good Fortune; such as That we are now Met to Commemorate) and it is this; That the Belief of them tends to create and encourage a *National Piety*, and a Publick Avow'd Dependence upon God, in the greatest Extremities. For, when once Men are firmly persuaded, either from the Experience of what They themselves have felt, or from the Assurance of what hath  
 happen'd

happen'd to Others, that no People can S E R M.  
be reduc'd to such a wretched and forlorn VII.  
Condition, but that the good Providence   
of God may, and will, if it sees fit, come  
in to their Rescue, and Deliver them;  
even without Hope, and against Hope: I  
say, when this Opinion is once fix'd in  
Mens minds, it introduces presently a Pub-  
lick Face of Religion amongst them, and  
common Endeavours of expressing their  
common Trust and Dependence upon  
God; and it ties them together by the  
strictest Bands of Fraternal Love, Amity,  
and Union. Of this the *Jews* are a very  
Signal and Instructive Instance, under  
their several Captivities, and Dispersions;  
where, tho' they were lost to all human  
hopes of recovery, yet, having an Assu-  
rance of the known Favour and Protecti-  
on of God towards their State, they per-  
sisted, in the strength of it, to wait for,  
and to expect their Deliverance; and had  
at those times, such a true, Sincere Spirit  
of Piety stirring amongst them, such Zeal  
towards God, such Unanimity amongst  
themselves, as they were utterly Strangers  
to,

SERMON. to, upon Other Occasions: Insomuch that

VII. They, who, when at home, under the free  
 ~~~~~ Enjoyment of their Temple-Worship, were  
 prone to all manner of Idolatry; when
 scattered into the Lands of Idols, where
 they had the Temptation ever near them,
 and before their Eyes, are observ'd never
 once to have comply'd with it. And this
 very Principle it is, that still supports and
 animates them, under this their Last and
 Greatest Dispersion, keeps them still ri-
 gidly addicted to their Rites, and closely
 combin'd among themselves, without mix-
 ing with any of the Nations among whom
 they dwell; under the hopes, that God
 will, yet once more, as he hath often al-
 ready done, make bare his Holy Arm in
 their Behalf, and restore the lost State of
Israel. Nay, even We our selves, who
 are now met to worship God, were very
 lately an Instance of the Efficacy of such
 Persuasions as these, towards raising up a
 dissolute People into all the Heights of
 an Universal and Undissembled Piety.
 For when, in the Late Hour of Distress
 and Danger, our Constitution in Church
 and

and State was just Sinking under us, and the two greatest Evils that belong to Human Nature, the Oppression of our Liberties, and of our Consciences, were ready to overtake us, and no Human help, that we could Then see, was near; how yet did our Belief of the Over-ruling Power of God sustain us with the Hopes that he would, in some way, or other, own our Cause, support our sinking State, and work out Salvation for us? And how were we wrought upon by this Confidence, to turn to him with the Utmost Unanimity and Earnestness? What Zeal did we then express for the Pure Religion of Christ? What Reverence towards his Priests? What Love towards one another? What good Resolutions did we take up? What Solemn Vows did we make of living answerably to Our Holy Profession? and, I believe, sincerely meant (tho' by our Behaviour since, one would scarce think, we meant) to perform them? How were our Churches then fill'd with Crowds of Worshipers? Our Altars surrounded by unusual Numbers of Devour

SER M.
VII.

Com-

SER M. Communicants? How were all Ranks
 VII. and Conditions of Men Then remarkable
 for their Piety and Seriousness; as remarkable as they are now for their Indifference and Prophaneness? Doubtless, the Addressees, we then made to God for Relief, were actuated and enliven'd by a reflection on the Surprizing Blessings of this Day; and we were encouraged to hope that God, who had once before wonderfully restor'd our Constitution, even when it was lost, would be prevail'd with also, by a timely Application, to preserve it from Ruin. And methinks, therefore, our Latter Deliverance should not make the Former forgot; when the One of these was the Foundation of our asking, and obtaining the Other. How know we, what Need we may Yet have of retreating to such Considerations, and fortifying ourselves with a Reflection on such Encouraging Precedents as these? And we do well, therefore, to cherish the Memory of them.

That we may do so, give me leave, in compliance with the Design of this Day
 and

and this Assembly, briefly to set before ^{SER M.} you, First, The Greatness and Extent of ^{VII.} that Publick Blessing for which we think ourselves oblig'd so long afterwards to pay our Publick Thanks; and then (what my Text more particularly directs me to) the Extraordinary and Surprizing manner in which it was convey'd to us.

The Blessing was of itself Vast and Comprehensive; for it took in all that was valuable and dear to us, either on a Religious, or Civil Account; and resettled a ruin'd Church and Kingdom on that Firm Basis, on which they stood, till Violent and Wicked Hands remov'd them; and on which may they stand for Ever! 'Tis natural for Men to think that Government the Best, under which they drew their first Breath, and to propose it as a Model and a Standard for all Others. But, if any People upon Earth have a just Title thus to boast, 'tis We of this Island; who enjoy a Constitution, wisely moulded, out of all the different Forms and Kinds of Civil Government, into such an Excellent and Happy Frame, as contains
in

SERM. in it all the Advantages of those several

VII.  Forms, without sharing deeply in any of their Great Inconveniences. A Constitution, nicely poiz'd between the Extremes of too much Liberty, and too much Power; the several Parts of it having a proper Check upon each other, by the means of which they are all restrain'd, or soon reduced, within their due Bounds: And yet the peculiar Powers, with which Each is seperately invested, are sure always, in Dangerous Conjunctions, to give way to the Common Good of the Whole. A Constitution, where the Prince is cloath'd with a Prerogative, that enables him to do all the Good he hath a mind to; and wants no Degree of Authority, but what a Good Prince would not, and an Ill one ought not to have: Where he governs, tho' not Absolutely, yet Gloriously, because he governs Men, and not Slaves; and is obey'd by them chearfully, because they know that, in obeying Him, they obey those Laws only which They themselves had a share in contriving. A Constitution, where
the

the External Government of the Church S E R M.
is so closely interwoven with that of the VII.
State, and so exactly adapted to it, in all
its parts, as that it can flourish only, when
That flourishes; and must, as it hath al-
ways hitherto done, decline, die, and re-
vive with it. In a word, where the In-
terest of Prince and Subject, Priest and
People, are perpetually the same; and
the only fatal Mistake, that ever happens
in our Politicks, is, when they are thought
to be divided.

It is objected indeed to this Admira-
ble Model, that it is liable to frequent
Struggles and Concussions within, from
the several Interfering Parts of it: But
this, which is reckon'd the Disease of our
Constitution, may rather be thought a
mark of its Soundness, and the chief Se-
curity of its Continuance. For 'tis with
Governments exactly contriv'd, as with
Bodies of a nice Frame and Texture;
where, the Humours being evenly mix'd,
every little Change of the Proportion in-
troduces a Disorder, and raises that Fer-
ment which is necessary to bring all right
S again;

SER M. again; and which thus preserves the

VII. Health of the Whole, by giving early notice of whatever is noxious to any of the Parts: Whereas in Governments, as well as Bodies of a coarser Make, the Disease doth often not begin to shew itself, till it hath infected the whole Mass, and is past a Cure; and so, tho' they are disorder'd later, yet they are destroy'd much sooner. Accordingly we know that, under this Disadvantage, if it be one, our Constitution hath now lasted pretty Entire through many Ages: For, excepting the short Interruptions which *Conquest* gave, (which, however, have not been either so Many, or so Great, as some would make them) it hath continu'd much the same, in the main Parts and Branches of it, from the Earliest Times of our *Saxon* Ancestors, down to these Days. A clear Proof, that it is a Government suited every way to our Temper, and to our Clime; that it is perfectly made for Us, and We for It: And that God, therefore, never punishes us more sorely, than when he deprives us of it for a time; nor ever con-
fers

fers a greater Blessing upon us, than when S E R M.
he restores it — VII.

As he did on this happy Day; when, after the Confusions of a Long Civil War, attended with the Destruction of an Excellent Church, the Murther of a Gracious Prince, and the Grievous Tyranny of our fellow Subjects, he was pleas'd at length to give us back again, what we had so lightly departed from, our Old *English* Government and Laws; and together with them, what we before boasted of in Name only, the True Liberty of the Subject, and the Real Freedom and Honour of Parliaments. And to this Day, therefore, we owe all the Benefits we have since reap'd from the Regal Administration, all the Peace, Plenty, and Happiness, we have enjoy'd, or our Posterity after us shall enjoy, under it.

To the Influence of this Day it is owing, that we have now at the Head of our Troops, and our Councils, a Prince, who hath happily join'd together the Extremes of Martial and Political Virtues; and

SERM. knows as well as how to Govern a Free

VII.

People by their Own Laws and Customs, as to Command Legions: Who, whether in the Cabinet, or in the Field, is still equally in his Sphere; and is always indifferent, therefore, either to War, or Peace, any farther than the One, or the Other, shall conduce to the Good of his People, and the General Interest of Mankind.

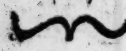
Nay, to this Day it is owing, That that Great Assembly before which I stand, are, under the Auspicious Conduct of our Prince, Arbiters of the Fate, and Governors of the Balance of *Europe*: That their Resolves have as wide an Influence, as the Firmest Leagues and Confederacies; and their very Counsels are more Formidable than the Hostile Preparations of Others: So that They, who lately felt the weight of the *English* Arms, will be afraid of entering upon such Measures as may awaken Your Resolution of once again taking them up; saying within themselves, according to the Expressions

Gen. xlix. of the Enlighten'd Patriarch; *Judah is*
 9. *a Lion's Whelp, he hath gone up from*
the

the Prey: He Stooped down, he Couched SERM.
as a Lion, and as an Old Lion; Who shall VII.
rouze him up? 

The Blessing, therefore, we Commemorate, was Great; and it was made yet greater by the Way in which God was pleas'd to convey it to us: For he did it in such a Manner, as to shew, that He was the Sole Author of it, and that it sprang not from Human Wit, or Contrivance. He did it, after our Forefathers were reduced to Extremities, and had tir'd themselves by Various Attempts to bring this Great End about, and had been baffled in all of them, and sat down at last in despair of effecting it. Then was it time for him to appear for our Redemption, and to give Himself the Glory of it. All was Darkness about them; without Form, and void; when the Spirit of God mov'd upon the Face of this Abyss, and said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*: And both God and Man saw that *this Light was Good*; the One, rejoicing in his Own Gift; and the Other, blessing and magnifying the Bestower of it. 'Tis

SERMON. true, the Reasoners of this World, who

VII.  love to solve every Event, without any Recourse to a Divine Power, will be ready to point out several Causes, which help'd forward this End, and smooth'd the way towards it. But though there were many such, yet it must be own'd, that All of them put together were not of Force enough to produce the Effect; nor, particularly, to account for that Universal Bent and Inclination of the People of all Ranks, Interests and Opinions, which, upon the first Opening of this wonderful Scene, at once discover'd itself; and which could proceed from Him alone, who hath the Hearts of all Men in his Hand, and turneth them whithersoever he listeth.

Alas! When Man is to influence Man, in order to bring about such Mighty Changes as these, the Work goes on but slowly. 'Tis hard to Unite in any Common Measures all the several little Sects and Parties, into which a Nation is crumbled; their Interfering Interests, Passions, and Prejudices will obstruct the
best-

best-laid Design: What it gains in one S E R M.
Place, it will lose in another; and never, VII.
but by the Intervention of a Superior
Power, succeed Universally. But when
God once comes into such a Work, it
ripens apace; all Obstructions presently
cease, all Difficulties vanish. As the
Tops of Corn bend this way, or that, be-
fore the Wind; so are the Various Minds
of the Multitude sway'd and inclin'd by
the Inward Breathings of his Spirit.

It is worth observing, therefore, in the
Vision of *Ezekiel*, from whence my Text
is drawn, how, even after *the Sinews
and the Flesh were come up upon the Dry
Bones, and the Skin had covered them
above*, yet still it is said, that *there was
no Breath in them*; and still therefore
the Prophet is commanded to *Prophecy
to the four Winds*, and to bid them
*breathe upon those slain, that they might
live*: And then, and not till then it was,
that *the Breath came into them, and
they lived, and stood upon their Feet, an
exceeding great Army*. The meaning
of which is that in every sudden Revo-

SER M. lution of State, though there be many
 VII. visible Dispositions and Causes, that con-
 ~~~~~ cur to favour it, yet still the last Finish-  
 ing Turn is always from God; who ani-  
 mates and invigorates the whole Design,  
 puts all its Parts at once into Motion, and  
 removes all Impediments.

Thus he effected the Deliverance of  
 this Day; by opening at once the Eyes  
 of a Deluded People, shewing them  
 their True Interest, and inspiring them  
 with Unanimity and Zeal to pursue it;  
 and in order to it, allaying their Mu-  
 tual Heats, lessening their Prejudices,  
 and softning their Aversions. *The Wolf*  
*he made to dwell with the Lamb, and*  
*the Leopard to lye down with the Kid;*  
 that is, the most Opposite Tempers were  
 brought to conspire peaceably in this  
 Great Event, the most Divided Interests  
 were reconcil'd in it: And even They,  
 who were prepar'd to Prophecy against  
 it, were yet, by an Over-ruling Influ-  
 ence, determin'd to pronounce a Bles-  
 sing; and forc'd, as they look'd on, to  
 take up their Parable, and say; *God*  
*bath*



*hath not beheld Iniquity in Jacob, nei- SER. M.  
ther hath he seen Perverseness in Israel; VII.  
the Lord his God is with him, and Numb.  
the shout of a King is among them. xxiii. 21.  
God hath brought them out of Egypt; 22, 23.  
he hath, as it were, the strength of an  
Unicorn. Surely, there is no Incant-  
ment against Jacob, neither is there  
any Divination against Israel: Accord-  
ing to this time it shall be said of Ja-  
cob, and of Israel, What hath God  
wrought?*

Since the Work, therefore, was His,  
let us give Him the Praise of it! Even  
as we do, by this Solemn Appearance:  
falling low on our Knees before his Foot-  
stool, and saying, *Not unto Us, O Lord, Ps. cxv. 1.  
not unto Us, nor unto our Forefathers,  
but unto Thy Name give Glory; for thy  
Mercy, and for thy Truth's sake! For  
thy Mercy's sake, which induc'd thee to  
give so happy a Turn to the Affairs of so  
Undeserving a People; and for thy  
Truth's sake, which thou intendest to  
secure and to re-establish by the Means  
of it.*

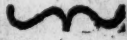
Let

274 *The Wisdom of Providence manifested*

SERM. Let us piously ascribe this, and all  
 VII other our Deliverances to God, and all  
 our Calamities to our Selves; acknowledging the One to be as properly the  
 Consequence of our Sins, as the Other is  
 the Result of his Unmerited Favour and  
 Goodness. And let us from such surprizing Events as these, which have confessedly something Divine in them, learn to lift up our Thoughts above Material Causes, and to instruct ourselves in all the Amazing Lessons of God's Governing Providence; by which he holds the Balance of Nations, and inclines it which way he pleases; so that *all the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing to him, and he doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can stay his Hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?*

Dan. iv.  
 35.

And this he now performs by the Administration of the Man *Christ Jesus*; to whom, immediately upon his Resurrection, he gave all Power, in Heaven, and in Earth; and whom, upon his  
*Ascent*

*Ascent into Heaven, (the Holy Subject* S E R M.  
also of this Day's Solemnity) he instated VII.  
in the full Possession and Exercise of that   
Power; declaring him King of Kings,  
and Lord of Lords. And, indeed, *Wor-* Rev. v.  
*thy is the Lamb that was slain, to re-* 12, 13.  
*ceive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom,*  
*and Strength, and Honour, and Glory,*  
*and Blessing. Therefore, Blessing and*  
*Honour, and Glory and Power, be unto*  
*him that sitteth upon the Throne, and*  
*unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!*

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[illegible]

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*The Duty of Publick Intercession and  
Thanksgiving for Princes.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable

House of COMMONS

A T

*St. Margaret's Westminster,*

*On Wednesday, March 8. 1704.*

Being the Day of Her MAJESTY'S  
Happy Accession to the THRONE.

---

I TIM. ii. 1, 2, 3.

*I Exhort, That, first of all, Supplications,  
Prayers, Intercessions, and giving of  
Thanks be made for all Men; for Kings,  
and all that are in Authority; that we  
may lead a Quiet and Peaceable Life,  
in all Godliness and Honesty: For this  
is Good and Acceptable in the Sight of  
God, our Saviour.*

THERE was nothing by which the SER M.  
Enemies of Christianity endea- VIII.  
your'd, and hop'd so much to retard the   
Pro-

SER M. Progress of it, as by representing to Prin-  
 VIII. ces, and Rulers, that the Propagation of  
 this Doctrine tended to subvert their Go-

vernment; that the Spreaders of it, where-  
 ever they came, *exceedingly troubled Cities,*  
*and turn'd the World upside down.* It be-  
 hov'd the Apostles, therefore, to guard  
 against this Objection, with all imagin-  
 able Care. As they knew, that the great  
 Work, in which they were employ'd,  
 was not, as yet, to be promoted, or coun-  
 tenanc'd by the Powers of this World; so  
 they resolv'd to give them no just Ground,  
 or Colour to obstruct it: and wisely, there-  
 fore, took all Occasions to declare their  
 Abhorrence of such as *despis'd Dominion,*  
*and spake evil of Dignities;* frequently  
 press'd upon their new Converts the Du-  
 ties of paying *Honour,* and *Fear,* and  
*Tribute* to the *Higher Powers,* [as being  
*the Ordinance of God*] and of *submit-*  
*ting themselves* to them, *not only for*  
*Wrath,* *but also for Conscience sake.* And,  
 for this Reason, it may be presum'd that  
 St. Paul introduceth his Instructions to  
 Timothy, the new Bishop of Ephesus, by

Jude 8.



*Exhorting him, that, in order to a due* S E R M.  
*Discharge of his high Trust, he should first* V I I I.  
*of all, or, above all things, take care,*  
*that Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions,*  
*and giving of Thanks be made for all Men;*  
*especially for Kings, and all that are in*  
*Authority; that we may lead a Quiet and*  
*Peaceable Life, in all Godliness, and*  
*Honesty: For this, says he, is Good, and*  
*Acceptable in the Sight of God, our Sa-*  
*viour.*

The Exhortation hath a double Aspect,  
on Mankind in general, and on Princes  
and Rulers in particular. I shall consider  
it, with regard to the Latter of these on-  
ly, for whose sake the Apostle seems  
chiefly to have made it; and under this  
View, it suggests to us Three Heads of  
Discourse, very proper to be handled on  
this Day, and in this Assembly.

I. It recommends a great Duty to I.  
us, the Duty of *making Supplications,*  
*Prayers, and Intercessions,* and of *giving*  
*Thanks, for Kings, and all that are in*  
*Authority.*

II. It

SER. M. II. It expresses the general Reason, and  
 VIII. Ground of that Duty: *For this is Good*  
 II. *and Acceptable in the Sight of God, our*  
*Saviour.*

III. III. It quickens us to the Exercise of it  
 by a special Motive, drawn from the Con-  
 sideration of our own Ease, Advantage,  
 and Happiness; *That we may lead a Quiet*  
*and and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness*  
*and Honesty.*

These Points I shall first consider, and  
 explain, in that Latitude, with which  
 the Apostle hath propos'd them; and  
 then adapt the general Argument to the  
 particular Occasion of this Day's joyful  
 Solemnity.

I. The Writers on this Place have distin-  
 guish'd with some Exactness between *Sup-*  
*plications, Prayers, and Intercessions*; and  
 endeavour'd to give us the strict and pro-  
 per Sense of each of these Words; which,  
 I think, it is neither necessary, nor easy

to determine. Sure we are, that by All SERM.  
 these together the Apostle intended to ex- VIII.  
 press the Petitionary Part of our Devo-  
 tions; and by *giving of Thanks*, the other  
 Part which consists of Hymns and Praises.  
 These Two comprise the whole of our Re-  
 ligious Service; and in both these ways  
 we are exhorted to address ourselves to  
 God, *for Kings, and all that are in Au-*  
*thority*, i. e. for the Supreme Magistrate,  
 and all Inferior and Subordinate Gover-  
 nors.

Ancient and Modern Interpreters agree  
 to understand this Passage of the Pub-  
 lick Offices, or Devotions of the Church:  
 and, indeed, the Episcopal Character of  
*Timothy*, to whom the Exhortation is  
 address'd; the Instructions which imme-  
 diately follow, and manifestly relate to  
 the same Head of Publick Worship; and  
 the profess'd Design of *St. Paul* in writ-  
 ting this Epistle, which was, to instruct  
*Timothy, How he ought to behave himself*; Tim. iii.  
*in the House of God*; do, I think, natu- 15.  
 rally, and necessarily determine us so to  
 understand it: Especially, if we consider,



SER M. that the Exhortation, thus understood,  
 VIII. was agreeable to the Practice of the *Jew-  
 ish* Church; the Pattern, which, in Mat-  
 ters of Worship, Discipline, and Govern-  
 ment, the Apostles chiefly follow'd: And,  
 accordingly, we find the Earliest Apolo-  
 gist for Christianity representing it as the  
 Constant and known Usage of the First  
 Christians, in all their Sacred Assemblies,  
 to Pray for the Lives of their Emperors,  
 and for the Prosperity of their State and  
 Government.

Our Church is in This, as in other Re-  
 spects, truly Primitive; for thus we pray  
 daily in her Liturgy. And what we do  
 every Day, we may, at some times, be  
 allow'd to perform more devoutly and  
 solemnly; even as often as the Course of  
 the Year shall bring on that Happy Day,  
 when Her Majesty first began to Reign,  
 on the Throne of her Ancestors, and in  
 the Hearts of her Subjects, and to re-  
 fresh this Church, and State, with the  
 kind Influences of her Mild and Graci-  
 ous Administration. Whenever this An-  
 nual Season of Joy returns, a lively and  
 affect-

affecting Sense of the Mercies it con- S E R M.  
 vey'd to us, cannot but return with it; VIII.  
 which we have no better way of expres-  
 sing, than by Offering up to God (as now  
 we do, and are by St. Paul Exhorted to  
 do) our Devoutest Thanks for the Bles-  
 sings we already feel, and our most ear-  
 nest Prayers for the Continuance and In-  
 crease of them.

The Reason and Ground of which Duty  
 is thus, in the

Second Place, expressed: *For this is* II.  
*Good and Acceptable in the Sight of God,*  
*our Saviour.* It is *Good*, i. e. highly Decent,  
 Expedient, and Reasonable in itself;  
 and, therefore, *Acceptable in the Sight*  
*of God our Saviour;* a Performance par-  
 ticularly well pleasing to Him, by whom  
 Kings Reign, of whose Power they par-  
 take, and whose *Image and Superscrip-*  
*tion* they bear. Let us take a distinct  
 View of the several Springs, from whence  
 our Obligation to this Duty may be sup-  
 pos'd to arise. And,

SER M. 1<sup>st</sup>, Our Applications to God in be-  
 VIII. half of the Princes and Rulers of this  
 ~~~~~ World are highly reasonable, as they are  
 Proper Expressions of our Good-will to
 Mankind, whose Fate is in their Hands,
 and whose Welfare in great Measure de-
 pends upon their Actions and Conduct.
 Sovereign Princes, and States, are the
 Chief Instruments, which the Providence
 of God employs, in his Administrations
 here below, and by which he brings
 about all those Mighty Events, that fix,
 or unsettle the Peace of the World.
 When these great Wheels move irregu-
 larly, the whole Machine of State is pre-
 sently render'd unserviceable, and num-
 berless depending Motions are either
 stopp'd, or disorder'd.

The Execution of all Laws is entrusted
 with Them; and Laws are the Source
 of every Advantage that redounds to
 Mankind from Society, which, without
 them, would not be preferable to Soli-
 tude. To the Influence of These it is
 owing, that we can call any Thing our
 Own, even Life itself; and are shelter'd
 from

from the Attacks, which the Lusts and SERM.
Passions of Men, not restrain'd by the VIII.
Principles of Reason and Religion, would
be every Day making upon us: That we
are polish'd in our Manners, and bred up
in all the Arts of Civil Life, which can
render us Useful, or Agreeable to each
other: and, chiefly, that we have Op-
portunities of thus appearing before God,
and praising him in the Great Congrega-
tion; of hearing his Everlasting Gospel
expounded to us, and being directed in
all those Paths of Piety and Virtue, which
lead to Peace in this World, and to Ever-
lasting Life in the next.

“ Of Law (said the excellent Mr.
Hooker long since, with a Compass of
Thought, and a Force of Words peculiar
to him; Of Law) “ no less can be ac-
“ knowledg'd, than that her Seat is in
“ the Bosom of God; her Voice, the
“ Harmony of the World; that all things
“ in Heaven, and Earth, do her Homage;
“ the very Least, as feeling her Care,
“ and the Greatest, as not exempt from
“ her Power; both Angels, and Men,

SERM. " and Creatures, of what kind soever,

VIII. " though Each, in different Sort and

" Manner, yet All, with one Uniform

" Consent, admiring her as the Mother

" of their Peace and Joy." He, there-

fore, upon whose Authority, and Will,

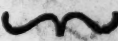
the Observation of Human Laws depends,

hath the Happiness, or Misery of Man-

PF, lxxv. 3. kind in his Power; *the Earth, and all
the Inhabitants thereof*, would be dis-
solw'd, did not such Persons *bear up the
Pillars of it.*

Nay, even the Example of Princes, is, itself, a Living Law to their Subjects, which fashions them by degrees into a Likeness of Manners, and spreads its Influence insensibly, but powerfully, thro' Cities, and Kingdoms.

So that, to make Supplications for Kings, that their Government may be Wise, Just, and Prosperous, is, to pray at once for all the Temporal Felicities which can accrue to us; a good Reign being the most Universal and Comprehensive Blessing, which either Man can ask, or God bestow; and for which we
have

have as much Reason to be Thankful as S E R M.
for the Light of the Sun, for Temperate VIII.
Weather, and Fruitful Seasons. 

Even an Ill Prince cannot help doing
a great deal of Good, by preserving
some Degree of Order and Government
in the World; and, therefore, even
Such an One hath a Title to our
Prayers, and Thanksgivings. But, when
Virtue ascends the Throne, it dispenses
Blessings without Number, and without
Measure; and spreads its Influence on all
around, and beneath it: *Its going forth* Pf. xix. 6.
is from the End of a Kingdom, and
its Circuit to the Ends of it, and there
is nothing hid from the Heat thereof.
Happy are the People that are in such
a Case; They have great Reason to
Bless, who are thus Blessed of the Lord.
But,

2dly, As the Virtues and Vices of those
who Govern, operate on all Inferior
Ranks of Men, in the way of Natural
Causes, so have they another, and a more
Extraordinary Effect; inasmuch as God
doth often take Occasion to Reward,

SERM. or Punish a People, not only by the
VIII. Means of Good, or Ill Princes, but e-
ven for the Sake of them. Plain In-
stances of this kind we have recorded in
Scripture; particularly, where Subjects
have suffer'd for the Iniquities of those
who were set over them, and the Ven-
geance, Merited by the One, hath been
Inflicted, and, as it were, Transferr'd
on the Other. Whether it be, that the
good, or ill Conduct of Rulers is some-
times Owing to their People, and may
therefore justly be Imputed to them;
or whether (as in the case of Visiting
the Sins of Parents on their Chil-
dren) by making them mutually liable
to the Consequences of each Other's
Actions, God intends to imprint a Mu-
tual Concern and Endeavour for each
Other's Welfare, and to Unite them
together in the strictest Bands of Interest,
and Affection: Whatever the Reason of
God's dealing in this manner with Prin-
ces and States may be, sure we are, that
he doth thus deal with them, and that
this is one Chief Article in that Scheme
of

of Political Justice, by which he governs S E R M.
the World. And can there be a better VIII.

Argument for our Interceding with God
in the behalf of *Kings, and all that are in
Authority*, than This, That we are really
at such times interceding for ourselves?
Since We may be chastis'd for Their
Transgressions, and reap the Rewards of
Their Piety and Goodness? Further,

3dly, The Cares of Empire are great,
and the Burthen, which lies upon the
Shoulders of Princes, very weighty; and,
on This Account, therefore, they Chal-
lenge, because they particularly want our
Prayers, that they may *have an Under-
standing Heart, to discern between Good
and Bad, and to go out and in before a
great People*. With what Difficulties is
their Administration often clogg'd by the
Perverseness, Folly, or Wickedness of
those they govern? How hard a thing do
they find it, to inform themselves truly
of the State of Affairs; where Fraud and
Flattery surround, and take such Pains to
mislead them? How nice a Task is it, to
distinguish between the Extremes of al-
lowing

SERM. lowing too much Liberty, and affecting
 VIII. too much Power? To what Daily Dan-
 gers are their Persons exposed, from the
 Attempts of Treachery, and Violence?
 How particular and pressing are the
 Temptations, to which the Height of
 Power, they have attain'd, makes them
 liable? They are above the Reach of
 Fear, Reproof, and most of those Out-
 ward Checks, which God has placed, as
 Guards upon Private Mens Virtue; and
 are, on that account, in great danger of
 letting loose their Appetites and Passions
 in all manner of Excesses, without an
 Extraordinary Degree of God's Restraining
 Grace; which, therefore, it becomes,
 and concerns us to beg of Him, and for
 Them.

Christian Charity and Beneficence is
 a Debt which we owe to Kings, as well
 as to the Meanest of their Subjects. But
 how shall we extend our Good Offices to
 Those, who move in so high a Sphere?
 how, but by applying ourselves to One,
 that is yet higher than They, even our
 Common Lord and Master; and humbly
 implore

implore the Aids of his good Spirit, to SER M.
Comfort, Support, and Guide them? VIII.
This is the Only Compensation, or Re-
turn, which most of us are capable of
making to them, for their Vigilance and
Concern for the Publick Safety, the Pains
which they take, and the Hazards which
they run, to secure it.

And, to encourage our Requests in
their behalf, we may consider, in the
4th Place, That the Providence of God
doth, in a very Particular manner, inter-
pose towards swaying the Wills and Affec-
tions, directing, or over-ruling the In-
tentions of those who sit at the Helm:
for *the King's Heart is in the Hand of* Prov. xxi.
God, as the Rivers of Waters; He turn-
eth it whithersoever he listeth: He gives
a Bent to it, this way, or that; which it
takes as certainly, and easily as a Stream
is deriv'd into the Channels, which the
Hand of the Workman prepares for it.
On this Foundation Our Church professes
to build the Duty, and the Expedience of
praying for Princes: *We are taught* (says
She) *by the holy Word, that the Hearts of*
Kings

SERM. *Kings are in thy Rule and Governance,*

VIII. *and that thou dost dispose and turn them,
as it seemeth best to thy godly Wisdom.*

Indeed, the Spirit of God operates on the Spirits of All Men; but not in so Copious, so Powerful, and Extraordinary a manner, as it doth on the *Spirits of Princes*, which God delighteth to *restrain*, and, by that means, to shew himself *Wonderful among the Kings of the Earth*. It is the chief Care, the peculiar Province, the great Prerogative of the King of Kings, to rule the Thoughts of Those, who rule the Actions of Others; and thereby to bring about the Ends, the mysterious and inscrutable Ends of his Providence. And, 'tis well for Mankind that there is a being, who hath, and exerciseth such a Power; for unless there were, Human Power, left to itself, would make wild work in the World; the Chariot of Government would be often, and dangerously misguided by Rash Unskilful Drivers, did not an Invisible Hand hold the Reins, and gently direct the Course of it.

The Scripture seems to intimate, that SER M.
God hath appointed Tutelar Angels, to VIII.
act under him, for this Purpose; at least, 
that such Ministring Spirits there were,
before the Erection of the Mediatorial
Kingdom of our Saviour: For, in *Daniel*,
we read of Particular Princes, or Patrons,
assign'd, from the Angelic Host, to the
Grecians, and *Persians*; in order, as is
piously believ'd, to Encourage, Enlighten,
and Protect the Governors of those
Estates and Empires. We are interested
more nearly in the Welfare and good
Conduct of Princes than those Ministring
Spirits are; shall we not have some share
in procuring it? Ought we not with our
utmost Zeal to assist Those, whom God,
for our sakes, vouchsafes in so Eminent
a Manner to direct, and assist? And, what
better way of assisting them have we, than
by our *Supplications and Thanksgivings*?
Which, let me add, in the

Last Place, are never, on this Occasion,
so becomingly and forcibly address'd
to God, as in the great Congregation.
Blessings of a publick Nature and Influence

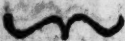
SERM. ence require as Publick and Solemn Acc-
VIII. knowledgments; and the proper Way of

obtaining Mercies, which affect Many, is, by pouring out the Joint-Requests of Many in behalf of them: For in the Spiritual, as well as the Carnal Warfare, Numbers are most likely to prevail. The Ancients, therefore, represent the Strength of such United Devotions by that of an Army, encompassing, besieging God; not to be

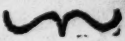
Tertullian defeated, or resisted by him. *Coimus ad Deum* (saith one of them) *ut, quasi Manufactâ, Precationibus eum ambiamus; hæc Vis Deo grata est:* "We come together in Troops, as it were, and surround God with our Prayers; this Violence of ours is well-pleasing to him." We Then Ask, and we Then give Thanks, with the greatest Alacrity and Earnestness, and, consequently, with the surest Hope of Acceptance, and Success, when we excite and warm each other into this Holy Performance; and, with One Heart, and One Mouth, utter the Awak'ning Words which the Devout Psalmist us'd, as a Solemnity like This,
which

which we are now met to celebrate: *This* S E R M.
is the Day which the Lord hath made; let VIII.
us be glad, and rejoice in it. Help now, O Pf. cxviii.
Lord; O Lord, send us now Prosperity. 24, 25, 27.
God is the Lord, who hath shewed us
Light: Bind the Sacrifice with Cords, yea
even to the Horns of the Altar.

I have explain'd the Grounds and Rea- III.
 sons of the Duty, intimated to us in those
 Words of the Text: *For this is Good, and*
Acceptable in the Sight of God our Saviour.
 I proceed to consider the special Motive
 there propos'd, to quicken us into the Ex-
 ercise of it: *That so we may lead a Quiet*
and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness, and
Honesty. I shall briefly shew, in what
 respects the Devotions recommended by
 the Apostle contribute to this End; and
 how far, therefore, our Own Ease, Ad-
 vantage, and Happiness is concerned in
 paying them. And
 1st, They have a Plain Tendency this
 way, as they are a Prevailing Argument
 with God; so to dispose and incline the
 Minds of Princes, that they may study

SERM. to promote the Quiet, Good and Prosperity of their Kingdoms. If we believe
 VIII.  our Prayers to have any effect, we cannot doubt their Usefulness in this Particular; which is too evident to need a farther Enlargement.

2dly, Such Prayers facilitate our *leading a Quiet and Peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty*; inasmuch as they express, in the most significant manner, our Love, and Zeal, and Reverence towards the Persons of Princes: and by such Instances of Duty invite them to make us suitable Returns. They effectually prevent those Jealousies, which Men cloth'd with Sovereign Power are too apt to entertain of their Inferiors; and promote that good Understanding between them, which is the Common Interest, and should be the Common Aim of Both; and wherein the Security, and Happiness of all well-order'd States chiefly consists. The Holy Wishes and Vows we make for Their Welfare will engage their unweary'd Endeavours for Ours; and the Thanksgivings put up by us for
 the

the Tranquillity, we enjoy under their SERM.
Reign, will move them to afford us fresh VIII.
and frequent Occasions for New ones. 

Particularly, the Church is in This way best capable of giving Aid and Assistance to the State; and by that means, of deserving, and securing its Protection and Favour. This is the *Spiritual Tribute and Custom*, which she pays to the *Supreme* Magistrate; and for which she receives, in Exchange, all the Temporal Blessings and Encouragement, that flow from the Munificence of Princes, and make her not only to Subsist, but Flourish.

3dly, *A Quiet and Peaceable Life* is the Fruit of these Publick Devotions; as We ourselves derive from thence a Spirit of Meekness, Submission, and Respect to our Superiors, and are led into an Habitual Love and Practice of those Mild Graces and Virtues, which we, at such times, solemnly exercise, and pray God to inspire us with; and which, when generally practis'd, make Crowns sit easy on the Heads of Princes, and render Them,

SER M. and their Subjects, equally a Blessing to

VIII. Each Other. Such as sincerely pray
 for the Prosperity of a State, are not
 likely to disturb it themselves, or to
 push on Others into Attempts against
 the Peace of it: They come out of the
 Church, still more Devoted to their
 Prince, and Country, than they went
 in; more Zealous, and better Qualify'd
 to discharge their Duty to the Publick,
 in their several Places and Stations.

IV. I have sufficiently explain'd the Exhortation of *St. Paul*, and the General Arguments, and Motives, by which he enforceth it. The best way of closing, and applying these Reflections will be, to take a View of the Character of those Princes, on whose behalf the Apostle presseth on the Christians of his Time the Practice of this Duty, and from thence to shew, how much stronger Obligations We are under of complying with it. And

1st, The Princes, for whom the Apo-
 Eph. ii. 12. *He* pleads, were Infidels, *without Christ*,
Aliens

Aliens from his Commonwealth, and SERM.
Strangers from the Covenants of his VIII.
Promise; and such also they were, by the

Permission of God, to continue for Three Hundred Years after the Coming of our Saviour; that so his Gospel might not owe its first Establishment, in any degree, to the Secular Powers; but might spread and fix itself every where, without their Help, and against their Will; and manifest to all the World its Divine Original, by the Miraculous manner in which it should be propagated. The Kings of the Earth were not, during this Period, to promote the belief of the Gospel, any otherwise than by Opposing it. When the rest of the World had come in, and own'd our Saviour, Then, and not till Then, were the Rulers of it to submit their Scepters to the Scepter of Christ; to Embrace, Protect, and Encourage his Doctrine, but not to Plant it; that, in This Sense also, the Prediction of our Lord concerning the Progress of his Kingdom, and the Call of Believers, might

U 2

be

SERM. be verify'd, that *the Last of Men should*
 VIII. *be First; and the First, Last.*

Mat. xx.
 16.

If then, the Tribute of *Supplications*
and Thanksgivings was due to those Hea-
 then Princes, is it not much more due
 to those who are Christians? Who are in-
 grafted, as Principal Members, into that
 Mystical Body, of which *Christ Jesus* is
 the Head? Who, under him, are the
 Chief Governors of his Church here be-
 low, and Guardians of all her Sacred
 Rights and Privileges? They beseech,
 and they praise God together with Us,
 in the same Common Assemblies; and
 we are, therefore, doubly oblig'd to be-
 seech, and to praise God for them. It
 may be observ'd, in the

2^d Place, That the *Roman* Emperors,
 for whom the Apostle here directs that
 Prayers should be made, were Usurpers
 and Tyrants; who acquir'd Dominion
 by invading the Liberties of a Free Peo-
 ple, and were Arbitrary and Lawless in
 the Exercise of it. Their Will and Plea-
 sure was the sole Standard of Justice;
 Fear was the Foundation of their Go-
vernment,

vernment, and their Throne was upheld S E R M.
only by the Legions which surrounded VIII.
it. 

Even for such Rulers the first Christians were exhorted to Supplicate, and give Thanks. How much more reasonably and chearfully do We, who are met here this Day, now offer up that Sacrifice for a *Queen*, who wears the Crown of her Forefathers, to which She is Entitled by Blood, and which was plac'd on her Royal Head, not only with the Free Consent, but with the Universal Joy and Acclamations of her Subjects? Who rules a willing People, not by the Terror of Rods and Axes, but with the Indulgent Tenderness of a Common Parent? Who desires rather to be Belov'd, than Fear'd by them, and takes the truest way toward securing their Utmost Love, by shewing, in every Step of Her Gracious Conduct, that She entirely loves them? Who hath no Interest, can have no Interest, separate from Theirs; and upon whom Malice itself could never fasten a Suspicion of her pursuing any

SERM. Measures, which aim'd rather at Her Own
 VIII. Glory, or Advanrage, than the Common
 ~~~~~ Good of *England*?

The Law is as much a Rule to Her, as to the least of Those who obey her; the fixt Measure, not only of Her governing Power, but even of Her Will to govern; and She makes no other Use of that Power, with which the Laws have invested Her, than to give Life and Force to them.

The Blessings of Her Mild and Merciful Government descend from the  
 Pf. lxxii. 6. Throne upon Her People, *as the Small Rain cometh down into a Fleece of Wool, without Vehemence, or Noise; like the Drops of Rain, that water the Earth, gently, and insensibly.* She draws up the Free Offerings of our Love, and Duty, only to return them back again in Showers of Royal Bounty; which make glad the Land, and produce a mighty Increase.

Surely, our Lips cannot be better employ'd, than in Praising God for such mighty Benefits, as these, and for the  
 Blessed



Blessed Hand, through which he conveys them! SERM.  
VIII.

3dly, Those who govern'd the World, at, or near the Time of St. *Paul's* writing this Epistle, had no Personal Merits, or Virtues to recommend them to the Prayers of the Faithful. *Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero*, under whom the Christian Faith was disseminated, and for all whom, we may presume, the Faithful equally made their Supplications, were not only Bad Princes, but Bad Men; infamous for their Lust, Cruelty, and other Vices: But they were in *Authority*, and that gave them a Right to be mention'd in the Stated Offices of the Church.

How different from Their Case is Ours, whose Eyes behold on the Throne a *Queen*, who deserves to sit there, as well by Her Virtue, as by Her Birth; Who, in that Publick and Exalted Station, preserves all the Innocence and Sanctity of a Private Life; Who is Superior to all the Temptations, which a great Power suggests, and which nothing but as great

S E R M. Goodness ever overcomes; and to whom,  
 VIII. therefore, Her Subjects seem to be almost  
 as much oblig'd for the Shining Pattern of  
 unaffected Piety, which She sets them,  
 as for all the other Blessings of Her Pro-  
 sperous Reign. The Accession of such  
 a Queen to a Crown is indeed a Felicity,  
 which we may commemorate Annually,  
 with a Devout and Sincere Joy: God  
 grant, that we may commemorate it  
 Often! And that we may still find more  
 and more reason thankfully to acknow-  
 ledge it!

Finally, the Emperors of *Rome*, for  
 whom the Primitive Christians were o-  
 blig'd to Pray, and to give Thanks, were  
 their avow'd Enemies, and Persecutors;  
 who did, what they could, to hinder the  
 Establishment of the Church of *Christ*,  
 and to suppress those very Assemblies,  
 wherein these Devotions were offer'd up  
 to God in their behalf.

Whereas She, for whom we now Adore  
 and Bless the good Providence of God, is,  
 by Her Office, and by her Inclination,  
 the Defender, and Friend, the Patroness,  
 and

and Nursing-Mother of his Church esta-  
 blish'd amongst us. In this Church she  
 was Baptiz'd and Bred; and, therefore,  
 naturally loves it; She was made early,  
 and throughly acquainted with its Doc-  
 trine, and Government, and, consequent-  
 ly values it; She hath been a Religious  
 Faecquenter of its Worship, and a steady  
 Adherer to its Interest; and was pre-  
 par'd, in the late times of Distress and  
 Danger, to Suffer with it, and for it.  
 From her, therefore, now She is ad-  
 vanced to a Throne, all the Members,  
 and Ministers of this Church may justly  
 promise themselves, not only the Oppor-  
 tunity of *leading a Quiet and Peace-  
 able Life*, (the utmost which the First  
 Christians could hope for from Their  
 Emperors) but Farther Advantages;  
 not merely Protection, but all suitable  
 Instances of Royal Favour and Encou-  
 ragement.

Witness Her late Act of Princely  
 Bounty and Compassion to the Poor  
 Clergy of this Church: An Act, une-  
 quall'd by any Prince, nay, by all our  
 Princes,

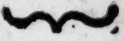


SERMON. Princes, since the Reformation; and  
 VIII. which (I was going to say) may atone  
 for Acts of a very different kind, done  
 in some of their Reigns. It griev'd Her  
 Religious Heart to see, that Those, who  
*wait at the Altar*, should not *partake*  
*with the Altar*, in such a Measure, as  
 is requisite to preserve the Respect due  
 to their Characters, and to give Encou-  
 ragement, and Success to their Labours.  
 She seem'd to hear them complaining,  
 in the pathetick Words of the Psalmist;

Pf. cxxiii.

3, 4.

*Have Mercy upon us, O Lord, have*  
*Mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly*  
*fill'd with Contempt: Our Soul is ex-*  
*ceedingly filled with the Scorning of those*  
*that are at Ease, and with the Contempt*  
*of the Proud.* To rescue Them, and  
 the Religion which they taught, from  
 these Disadvantages, She extended her  
 Beneficence in the most Ample Manner;  
 and took Care to have the good Effects  
 of it perpetuated to Future Ages; thro'  
 the Chearful Assistance of those, who  
 Compose this Illustrious Assembly, and  
 whose Assistance, we are sure, will ne-

ver be wanting, to perfect any Work, S E R M.  
that is begun for the Honour, Advantage, VIII.  
and Security of the Church of *England.* 

Scarce any but a Royal Heart was capable of entertaining so large a Design; as none but Royal Hands were, in a degree, equal to the Execution of it.

The Benefaction is, indeed, worthy of Her, from whom it sprung; and carries in it Marks of a Wisdom, as Extensive as Her Goodness. For it is not Confin'd, tho' Given, to those who Minister in Holy Things; the Happy Fruits, and Effects of it will, through this Channel, be convey'd to all Ranks and Orders of Men among us. All will share in that Munificence, which redounds to the Service of Religion, the Common Inheritance, and Blessing of All; and which gives Life and Weight to the Instructions of Those, who, as meanly as they may be thought of, on other Accounts, are yet *the Ambassadors of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God.*

An Unenvy'd Bounty, therefore, it needs must be; *a Good*, which cannot decently

SERM. decently be *evil spoken of*, even by Such  
 VIII. (if there be any such) who wish not well  
 either to the Objects, or the Bestower  
 of it.

Great and groundless Reproaches have, in other respects, been cast on Our Church, as if there were still some Remains of Popery in it. Poor Vicarages are really such; which took their Rise from the pretended Vicar of Christ, who endow'd Abbies, and Monasteries, oftentimes, with the Spoils of Church-Livings, for the Support and Maintenance of his Spiritual Tyranny. 'Twas the great Blemish of our Reformation, that, when Religious Houses were suppress'd, some Part, at least, of their Revenue was not restored to its Original Use. But the Defects of that Time were, we trust, reserv'd to be supplied by Her Majesty; and the goodly Frame of our Constitution is to be perfected, as it was modelled, by the Hand of a Woman.

A Prince, less solicitous for the Good of Religion, tho' intent on such a Work, would yet have deferr'd it, till the Expensive



pensive War, wherein we are engaged, SERM.  
 was brought to a Close. But the Com- VIII.  
 passion, and Godly Zeal of our Gracious   
 Sovereign would not be check'd by this  
 Consideration : The Love of doing Good  
 overcame all the Difficulties, which lay  
 in the Way towards doing it. She thought,  
 that to Consecrate One Part of Her Re-  
 venue to so Pious an Use, would draw  
 a Blessing on the Management of all  
 the other Branches of it; That the *Cruise*  
*of Oil* would not fail ever the sooner,  
 for bestowing a Portion of it on a Pro-  
 phet, or any of the Sons of the Pro-  
 phets; That the Earnest Prayers of Those,  
 whom she thus reliev'd, would be as Ser-  
 viceable to Her in this War, as the In-  
 come itself; and that Her Charity would,  
 in the Expressions of the Son of *Syrach*, Ecclef.  
*Fight for her against her Enemies bet-* xxxix. 13.  
*ter than a Mighty Spear and a Strong*  
*Shield.*

And, surely, the Unanimous and  
 Early Dispatch of the Supplies, the Pre-  
 sent Height of Publick Credit, and the  
 Eagerness with which all her Subjects  
press

SER M. press to fill Her Coffers with their Loans,  
 VIII. are not Signs, that She hath by any Act  
 of misapply'd Bounty hitherto lost Ground,  
 either in the Favour of Heaven, or in  
 the Affection, and Esteem of Her People.

May that God, whom She thus serves,  
 and imitates, extend her Life and Reign  
 beyond the Ordinary Term of either;  
 and Crown every Year of them with new  
 Instances of his Goodness to Her, and  
 to these Kingdoms!

*Now, unto the King Eternal, Immor-  
 tal, Invisible, the only Wise God,  
 be Honour, and Glory, for ever and  
 ever! Amen.*

---

*The Rule of doing as we would be done unto:*

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Explain'd in a

# SERMON

Preach'd before Her

## MAJESTY

AT

St. James's CHAPEL,

On Sunday, Nov. 5. 1704.

---

St. MATTH. vii. 12.

*All things, whatsoever ye would that  
Men should do unto you, do ye even  
so to them; for this is the Law and  
the Prophets.*

**T**HE Sentence I have read unto SERM.  
you, is very fitly plac'd towards IX.  
the Close of our Saviour's admirable  
Sermoa



SERMON. Sermon on the Mount, as being, in  
 IX. great measure, the Epitome and Sum of  
 what the Divine Preacher had there express'd more at large. Nor is it less fitly order'd to be recited at the Holy Table, in the most Solemn Part of the Service of this Day; on which we meet annually to Commemorate our Deliverance from the Attempts of those bloody and merciless Men, who seem to have out-done all their Predecessors and Successors in Wickedness, by a notorious Contempt of this great Evangelical Rule, and of all the Principles of common Humanity. The Practice of those Conspirators was the perfect Reverse of this Precept; and we cannot, therefore, better be taught, or incited to detest the one, than by a due Illustration and Enforcement of the other. This I shall attempt, by offering to your Thoughts some Considerations, First, on the Rule here laid down; *All Things, whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye even so to them*; and then on the short, but full *Encomium*, bestow'd upon it, that it *is the Law and the Prophets*:

*phets*: Which shall be follow'd by some SERM.  
*Inferences*, naturally arising from the IX.  
 Whole; and the General Reflections ad-  
 vanc'd (tho' they may all along easily be  
 understood to refer, yet) shall afterwards  
 be particularly apply'd to the Subject of  
 this Day's Solemnity.

As to the Rule itself, we may distinct-  
 ly consider the just *Extent* and *Bounds*  
 of it, the *Reason* of its *Preferableness* to  
 all other Rules, in Point of *Evidence* and  
*Conviction*, the manifest *Equity* and *Ex-*  
*actness*, the peculiar *Properties* and *Ad-*  
*vantages* of it.

*All things, whatsoever ye would that*  
*Men should do unto you, do ye even so to*  
*them!* Words of great Force and Energy;  
 and yet the most simple, plain, and per-  
 spicuous that can be! And which therefore  
 Commentators do (as they too often do)  
 obscure and perplex, by a Pretence of  
 Explaining. The only possible Doubt is,  
 concerning the *Extent* of the *Matter*  
 contain'd in them: For it must be al-  
 low'd, that there are many Cases, where-  
 in we are by no means oblig'd to grant

S E R M. that to others, which we ourselves per-

IX.

haps (were we in their Circumstances, and they in ours) might be willing enough, unreasonably willing, to obtain from them. A Benefactor is not bound to comply with the Demands of such as ask unmerited Favours; tho' conscious, that He himself might be apt to make as extravagant Requests, were it his turn to be the Object of another Man's Beneficence. A Magistrate is not at Liberty, much less under any Obligation to turn the Edge of Justice from an importunate Offender; because, if He himself were the Criminal, he should certainly, and equally desire to escape unpunish'd. The Rule, therefore, which makes what we desire of other Men, the Measure of our dealing toward them, is to be understood, not of vicious and excessive Desires, but of such only as are fit and reasonable; such Requests as we can, in our calmest Thoughts, justify to ourselves; such as, we are sure, may be made without Indecency, and cannot be refus'd without Inhumanity. And, under

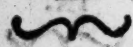


der this necessary Limitation, the Pre-<sup>SERM.</sup>cept of the Text may be thus under-<sup>IX.</sup>stood: "Put thy self into such a Man's  
" Condition, and consider, what Treat-  
" ment, what Favours, in That Case,  
" thou might'st fairly and justly expect  
" from Him; and be Thou fare to deal  
" with Him, according to those thy just  
" and regular Expectations." And this  
I take to be the true Explication of that  
other equivalent Precept, given in the  
*Gospel*, to *Love our Neighbours as our  
selves*; which we may then, in the most  
proper and Strict Sense of the Words, be  
said to do, when we, first, place our  
selves in our Neighbour's stead, and,  
then, learn to love him; by considering,  
What degree of Love and Good-Will,  
of Forbearance and Forgiveness, we might,  
under that Change of Circumstances,  
challenge from him.

It may be thought, that the Rule,  
thus temper'd and qualify'd, will not be  
of any special Use, or Moment to us, in  
the Direction of our Practice; inasmuch  
as the Lines of Duty do not seem to be

SERM. more clearly mark'd out, by this Method

IX.



of Comparison, than they would have been, by a direct Injunction to us, so to deal with others, as right Reason and our Consciences inform us, that we ought to deal with them. For, after all, when we have made Another Man's Case Ours, we are still left to judge, what, under such a Change of Circumstances, we might, in Equity and Reason, expect from him, before we can determine, after what manner we are to behave ourselves towards him: And, therefore, which way soever we take the Measure of our Duty; to the Bar of Equity and Reason we must, it seems, in order to the fixing it, always finally appeal.

'Tis true, we must — But the Maxim of the Text is That, which, of all others, doth most effectually assist us towards making a free Use of our Reason, and forming right Judgment of Things, on such Occasions: For, by the Means of it, we are able to consider our Duty without Prejudice, and to state the Bounds of it impartially and fairly. When we deter-

mine

mine amiss concerning the Obligations SER M.  
 incumbent upon us in respect of other IX.  
 Men; 'tis by reason of that strong weight  
 of Self-Love, which, like a Byass, in-  
 clines, and secretly sways our Minds  
 towards that Side on which our Own  
 Interest lies. To set this Error right,  
 we suppose our Selves to be the Men,  
 who are to receive this Treatment *from*  
 Others, which we are about to practise  
*toward* Them; and, then, the same  
 Selfish Principle makes that appear ve-  
 ry hard and unreasonable, which be-  
 fore it inclin'd us to approve; and  
 thus our warp'd and perverted Judg-  
 ment, by being bent as much towards  
 the Opposite Side, recovers its Strait-  
 ness. The Rule of the Text, therefore,  
 is, at the Bottom, a wise Art of re-  
 bating one degree of our Partiality by  
 another; it enables us to take two se-  
 veral Views of our Duty, to eye it in  
 different Situations, and under different  
 Lights; and by that means, more di-  
 stinctly and thoroughly to discern it.  
 And, in this Sense, *Measuring ourselves* 2 Cor. x.



SERM. by ourselves, and comparing ourselves  
 IX. with ourselves, we take the surest way  
 to be both Just, and Wise.

There's nothing, we know, that gives a Man so true and lively a Sense of the Sufferings of Others, or restrains him so powerfully from doing Unrighteous and Oppressive things, as his having smarted, formerly, himself, under the Experience of them. Now, the supposing another Man's ill Usage to be Ours, is, the giving ourselves a present Sense, as it were, a kind of feign'd Experience of it; which doth, for the time, serve all the Purposes of a True one.

Upon these Accounts it is, that the Precept of the Text carries greater Evidence, and a fuller degree of Conviction in it, than any other Rule of Morality; it's apparent Equity and Reasonableness, is what we are next to consider. And this is so plain a Point, as not to want, or indeed be capable of, a solemn Proof: For the Precept manifestly aims at That, which is the known Foundation of Equity and Justice, in all Matters of Intercourse

tercourse between Man and Man; the S E R M.  
 reducing things to one Common Stand- IX.  
 ard, by the Application of which they   
 are all to be examin'd, and try'd. *Thou* Deut. xxv.  
*shalt not have in thy Bag, or in thine* 13, 14.  
*House* (said the Levitical Law) *divers*  
*Weights, and divers Measures; a Great*  
*and a Small* [i. e. one, wherewith to  
 Buy; and another, wherewith to Sell:]  
*But thou shalt have a perfect and just*  
*Weight, a perfect and just Measure shalt*  
*thou have.* What is said here of ordi-  
 nary Traffick and Dealing, holds as true  
 of the General Commerce of Human  
 Life, and that Exchange of Good Offices  
 by which Society is upheld: There must  
 be a *perfect Weight*, and a *just Measure*,  
 by which all Men are mutually oblig'd  
 to regulate their Conduct, in acting and  
 suffering, in commanding and obeying,  
 in giving and receiving; and this can be  
 no other than the Equal and Righteous  
 Rule of the Text, the *Doing* in all Cases,  
 and to all Persons, *even as we would*  
*be done unto.* There is no one so ab-  
 surd and unreasonable, as not to see, and

SERMON. acknowledge the Absolute Equity of  
 IX. this Command, in the Theory, how-  
 ever he may swerve and decline from it  
 in his Practice; and to agree upon it as  
 that Golden Mean, which, if univer-  
 sally observ'd, would make the World  
 universally Happy; every Man a Bene-  
 factor, a Good Angel, a Deity, as it  
 were, to his Fellow-Creatures; and  
 Earth, the very Image of Heaven! I need,  
 I can say no more, concerning the Rea-  
 sonableness of this Precept: However,  
 it may help to excite and quicken your  
 Desires, and Hopes of obeying it, if I  
 proceed, as I propos'd, to point out some  
 distinguishing *Properties* and *Advantages*  
 of it.

The First of which is, that it is alike  
 easy and obvious to all Understandings;  
 to the meanest, and most ignorant Men,  
 as well as to those of the greatest Parts  
 and Improvements. God is, on this,  
 as well as on other Accounts, no Re-  
 specter of Persons; having made that  
 which is most necessary, most common,  
 and, consequently, suited this Principle,  
 which



which all Men have equal Occasion to S E R M.  
use, equally to the Apprehensions of all IX.  
Men. They, therefore, who are incapable  
of long Trains in Deductions of Reason, and of adapting the several Rules of Morality to the various Circumstances of Action, are yet able (as able as the acutest Philosophers, or Casuists) to look into their own Hearts, to ask themselves this plain Question, and to return a clear Answer to it: "Would I my self be  
" content, that others should thus deal  
" with me? Why then should I so deal  
" with any Man?"

Human Laws are often so numerous, as to escape our Memories; so darkly sometimes, and inconsistently worded, as to puzzle our Understandings; and their original Obscurity is not seldom improv'd by the nice Distinction and subtle Reasonings of those who profess to clear them: So that, under these several Disadvantages, they lose much of their Force and Influence; and, in some Cases, raise more Disputes than, perhaps, they determine. But here is a Law, attended  
with

SER M. with none of these Inconveniences; the  
 IX. grossest Minds can scarce misapprehend  
 it; the weakest Memories are capable of  
 retaining it: No perplexing Comment  
 can easily cloud it; the Authority of no  
 Man's Gloss upon Earth can (if we are  
 but sincere) sway us to make a wrong  
 Construction of it. What is said of all  
 the Gospel-Precepts by the Evangelical  
 Prophet, is more eminently true of This;

It. XXXV. *It is an High-Way; and the Wayfaring-  
 8. Man, tho' a Fool, shall not err therein.*

'Tis not enough that a Rule, which  
 is to be of General Use, is suited to all  
 Capacities; so that, where-ever it is re-  
 presented to the Mind, it is presently  
 agreed to: It must also be apt to offer  
 itself to our Thoughts, and lie ready for  
 present Use, upon all Exigences, and  
 Occasions. And such, remarkably such,  
 is that which our Lord here recommends  
 to us. We can scarce be so far surpriz'd  
 by any immediate necessity of Acting, as  
 not to have time for a short Recourse to  
 it, room for a sudden Glance, as it were  
 upon it, in our Minds; where it rests,  
 and

and sparkles always, like the *Urim* and *Thummim* on the Breast of *Aaron*. IX.

There is no Occasion for us to go in Search of it to the Oracles of Law, dead, or living; to the Code, or *Pandects*; to the Volumes of Divines, or Moralists: *Quod petis, hic est*; we need look no farther than our Selves for it: For (to use the apposite Expressions of *Moses*) This Commandment, which I Deut. xxx.  
Command thee this Day, is not hidden 11, 12, 13,  
from thee, neither is it far off. 14. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the Sea, that thou shouldst say, who shall go over the Sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, that thou mayst do it.

It is, moreover, a Precept, particularly fitted for Practice; as it involves in the very Notion of it a Motive, stirring us up to Do what it Enjoins. Other

Moral



SER M. Moral Maxims propose naked Truths to  
 IX. the *Understanding*, which operate often  
 but faintly and slowly on the *Will* and  
*Passions*, the two Active Principles of  
 the Mind of Man: But it is the peculiar  
 Character of This, that it addresseth it  
 self equally to all these Powers; imparts  
 both Light and Heat to us; and, at the  
 same time that it informs us certainly  
 and clearly, what we are to do; excites  
 us also, in the most tender and moving  
 manner, to the Performance of it. We  
 can see our Neighbour's Misfortune,  
 without a sensible Degree of Concern;  
 which yet we cannot forbear expressing,  
 when we have once made His Condition  
 our Own, and determin'd the Measure  
 of our Obligation towards him, by what  
 We ourselves should, in such a Case,  
 Expect from Him: Our Duty grows  
 immediately our Interest, and Pleasure,  
 by the means of this powerful Principle,  
 the Seat of which is, in truth, not more  
 in the Brain, than in the Heart of Man:  
 It appeals to our very Senses; and ex-  
 erts its secret Force in so prevailing a  
 way,

way, that it is even Felt, as well as Un-<sup>S E R M</sup>  
derstood by us.

IX.

The Last Recommendation of this Rule I shall mention, is its Vast and Comprehensive Influence: For it extends to all Ranks and Conditions of Men, and to all kinds of Action and Intercourse between them; to matter of Charity, Generosity and Civility, as well as Justice; to Negative, no less than Positive Duties. The Ruler and the Ruled, are alike subject to it; Publick Communities can no more exempt themselves from its Obligation, than Private Persons; *All Persons must fall down before it, all Nations must do it Service.* And, with respect to this Extent of it, it is, that our Blessed Lord pronounces it, in the Text, to be *the Law and the Prophets*. His meaning is, that, Whatever Rules of the *Second Table* are deliver'd in the Law of *Moses*, or in the larger Comments and Explanations of that Law, made by the Other Writers of the Old Testament, [here, and elsewhere, stil'd *the Prophets*] they are all virtually compris'd in this  
one

Pfal. lxxii.  
11.

TERM. One short significant Saying, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you,*

*do ye even so unto them.* From this, as from their Common Source, they were all originally deriv'd; and into this they

Gal. v. 14. may be all ultimately resolv'd. For all

*the Law is fulfilled in One Word,* (saith

St. Paul) *even in This, Thou shalt Love*

*thy Neighbour as thy Self:* And I have

shew'd You, that this Word is the same

in Sense with the Word, or Precept of

Text; though it be not deliver'd in so

clear, so expressive, and so convincing

a Manner. And this Word, therefore,

Tim. i. 5. the same Apostle calls elsewhere, *The*

*End of the Commandment;* and St.

Jam. ii. 8. *James, The Royal Law:* That, (they

both mean) in which all the Lines of

Duty, relating to our Neighbour, cen-

ter; and under which, as under one com-

mon Head and Principle, they may be

reduc'd and rang'd.

Various are the Uses, into which this

Important Truth, thus handled, is capa-

ble of being improv'd.

For



For from hence I might, in the first SERM.  
place, take Occasion to consider, Whe- IX.  
ther, and how far, the Precept here   
given be the *Whole*, not only of the  
*Law*, and the *Prophets*, but of the  
*Gospel* also; and what Evangelical Du-  
ties \* there are, which seem, as the  
Schools speak, to *transcend* it; to be  
(as Mysteries are, in respect of Reason)  
not indeed *against* this great Principle,  
but *above*, and *beyond* it; and such, as  
we cannot thoroughly account for, with-  
out taking the Consideration of ano-  
ther World into our Schemes and Rea-  
sonings.

I might, in the next Place, proceed to  
shew, how large a share Moral Truths  
have, even in the Body of reveal'd Doc-  
trines; since the Precept of the Text,  
which comprehends only the Duty we

---

\* Grotius in Acts xv. 20. *Si quis dicere velit, hæc ver-  
borum summâ comprehendi omnia Evangelii præcepta, fal-  
litur. Cum præceptum de Uno Deo colendo per Chri-  
stum, de abnegatione Sui, de subeundâ Cruce, non sint  
intra hunc ambitum: Alia etiam non nisi obscure admodum  
hæc referri possunt.*

SERM. owe to our Neighbour, is said to be *the*

IX. *Law and the Prophets.* An Expression, not indeed to be taken rigorously, and in the Letter! But which may however be understood to imply, that, as a great part of Holy Writ is employ'd in directly pressing the Duties abridg'd in this Precept, so the Rest of it plainly points and refers to them: Even the highest Mysteries of Faith, were not made known to us, without some regard to our Improvement in Practical Virtues; and the Knowledge of those, unless it tends to quicken our Obedience to these, will be of no manner of Service to us, will neither better us in this World, nor save us in the next.

From the Assertion, in the Close of the Text, it may be yet farther, and more clearly inferr'd, That there is a Chain of Moral Reasoning, by which the several Duties of the Second Table are connected together, and have an orderly dependance on One Common Principle, out of which they were drawn. That Virtue, therefore, is not the blind Homage

mage of our Nature, arbitrarily exacted SER. M.  
 from us; but a Duty fitted and propor- IX.  
 tion'd to the Light of our Faculties, and  
 every way our *Reasonable Service*: In a Rom. xii.  
 word, that Morality is a true and proper  
 Science, and all the Parts of it capable of  
 strict Demonstration.

An Observation, of manifold and ex-  
 cellent Use! For it reaches us to reject the  
 Pretences of those vain and fanciful En-  
 thusiasts, who have fram'd a Rule of Du-  
 ty to themselves, as contrary to the com-  
 mon Sense and Reason, as it is to the  
 current Language of Mankind; so Re-  
 fin'd and Sublime, as to be utterly un-  
 intelligible and impracticable: It is not  
 to be learn'd, or confuted, in the Me-  
 thod of other Doctrines; It is to be made  
 out only by the force of some Unaccoun-  
 table Impressions; by a Light, that shines  
 inward, and which cannot be commu-  
 nicated, or discover'd. But *We have not* Eph. iv.  
*so learn'd Christ*: On the contrary, we <sup>20.</sup>  
 are assur'd, that we do our Lord and  
 Master good Service, such as he will own,  
 and reward, when we apply ourselves to



SERM. establish the Truths of our Religion upon Principles of Reason, and to argue Men into their Duty by appealing to Natural Light, to the Certainty of first Principles, and to the Evident Deductions which may from thence be made by the sure Rules of Discourse; and that we are not to regard the Censures of those, who, on this account, shall stile us mere Moral Teachers, and Carnal Reasoners; but will not allow us to speak by the Spirit, or to be at all acquainted with the Life and Power of Godliness. As if Religion were a thing design'd not to be understood, or made out! But lost somewhat of its native Majesty and Force, when once we came to reason upon it!

Nor would it be an Unprofitable Reflection, to observe from hence the great Benignity and Goodness of God, who hath made even our *Own Will*, and our *Self-Love*, a complete Law of Action, and Measure of Duty to us. *All things whatsoever Ye would* [i. e. whatsoever Ye are willing] *that Men should do un-*

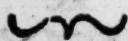
*to You, do Ye even so to Them!* Surely, SERM.  
a very Easy Yoak, and Light Burthen! IX.

We may be averſe, perhaps, from submitting to the Divine Will, or to the Will of any of our Fellow Creatures, exerciſing Authority over us: But can we be otherwiſe than contented, and pleas'd, in submitting to our *Own* Will, whatever it is? And yet a Submission to *That*, (when regulated by proper Circumſtances, and Views) is all that is requir'd of us. Merciful Saviour, thou ſaidſt once indeed to thy Father, as thou wert Man, *Not my Will, but thine be done!* Luke xxii.  
But who could expect, that thou<sup>42.</sup> ſhouldeſt have ſaid the ſame thing to Us alſo, as thou art God! However, thus, in effect, thou haſt ſaid, in the Precept now before us. Teach us, O Lord, by the means of this Precept, ſo duly to regulate our Wills, that we may ſafely follow them! Make Thy Will, Ours; that ſo, in doing our Own Will, we may be ſure to fulfil Thine alſo!

We ſee from hence, how far the Goſpel is from ſuppreſſing, or checking the

S E R M. principle of *Self-Love* in us, which it makes

IX.



the Ground and Rule of all that Love we owe to Others; and which, therefore, we may Innocently, nay, usefully carry to what Degree, what Height we please, if we do but take care that the Love of our Neighbour keeps pace with that of our Self, and is govern'd by it. Very Extravagant, therefore, and Unwarrantable are those Flights of Devotion, which some Enthusiastical Saints of the Church of *Rome* have indulg'd themselves in; who make it necessary for every Christian, in order to his arriving at Perfection, to divest himself of all manner of regard for himself; nay to despise, to hate, and to abhor himself, in the utmost Propriety of the Expression. Certainly, if what these Mystical Divines say, be true, impossible it is for a perfect Man to love his Neighbour at all: Since he is not allow'd, by their Scheme, to love himself; and yet is bound to love his Neighbour, as he loves himself, (or, which is all one, to do as he would be done unto) by our Lord's express Determination.

Several



Several other weighty Truths there S E R M.  
are, which this fruitful Theme would IX.  
suggest; and most of those, I have men-  
tion'd, might deserve to be handled more  
largely. But I must contract my thoughts  
on this head, that I may have room to  
insist on one Plain, Useful Inference,  
wherein I am to apply the Doctrine hi-  
therto deliver'd. It is this — If the Pre-  
cept of the Text be so Fundamental and  
Necessary, so Obvious and Easy, so Sure  
and Safe, so Full and Comprehensive a  
Rule of Life and Manners; how inex-  
cusable, upon all these Accounts, must  
those Persons be, who, throughout the  
whole Course of their Actions, shew,  
that they do not regard it? I shall, first,  
expostulate the Case with such as offend  
against this Precept at large; and, then,  
consider that particular and flagrant In-  
stance of the Breach of it which This  
Day affords us.

Are we, then, any of us, profess'd  
Contemners of Reveal'd Religion? I  
hope, we are not; but those who are,  
would still be thought to have a mighty Re-

SERM. verence for Reason (since by the help of

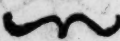
IX.

 Reason it is, that they endeavour to throw off Revelation); and while they have, this its Eldest and most Unquestion'd Law should, methinks, be very Sacred to them. What! Shall the great Masters of Exact Thinking, and Idolizers of Reason live in a perpetual Contradiction to the first Principle of it! Will They, who have so Little Light to guide themselves by, (that of Nature alone,) neglect to make use even of that Little, which they have? And yet, perhaps, there is no sort of Men whatever, that offend so remarkably against the Evident Righteousness of this Rule, as Those, who pretend most to magnify the Principle from whence it flows: There are none who pursue their Pleasures so keenly, and sooth all their Passions so carefully; are every way so Selfish, and so directly set in Opposition to this Generous and Equal Maxim; as the Men, who will tell you, They adore plain Common Sense, but cannot digest a Mystery. From whence it is manifest, that their Disesteem of Faith proceeds not

not from any just Esteem they have of SERM.  
Reason, or any Regard they bear to its IX.  
Laws; but merely from a Spirit of Li-  
bertinism, and a Desire of coming under  
as few Obligations as possible. 'Tis not  
a freedom of Thinking, which they aim  
at; but a freedom of Living, and of Do-  
ing what they please, without the Con-  
troul of Law, or Fear of Punishment.  
And, in order to this, one good Step is, to  
shake off Reveal'd Religion; and such an  
One, as is usually follow'd by another,  
the parting with All Religion, even That  
which Nature itself prescribes. To these  
Reasoners therefore we say, that the Rule  
of *doing as they would be done by*, is not  
(what they are so jealous of) any Imposi-  
tion upon their Understandings, any puz-  
zling mysterious Doctrine; it is all Pure  
Light, and Evidence, *and in it is no Dark-* John i. 5  
*ness at all.* Why then do They not Sub-  
mit to it? Why do They, of all Men  
Living, do as they would not be done by?  
Oppress and trample upon their Inferiors,  
Revile their Betters, and Supplant their  
Equals? Carry on their Unlawful De-  
sires,



S E R M. fires, without Stint, or Bounds, to the

IX.  Injuring the Property of those who are too weak to contend with them, to the defaming their Neighbour's Reputation, or defiling his Bed? Why, in a word, do they make Themselves the only Centre of all their Actions, Wishes, and Designs? and regard nothing, that is without them, any farther than it may be useful to their Purposes and Enjoyments? Let us see this Lofty Race of Men in good earnest stoop to this plain Dictate of Reason; and then we shall be inclin'd to think them sincere, when they pretend to hearken to the Voice of Reason, and to that only; and may have room to hope, that the good God, who sees them honestly practising all those Virtues which flow from this Rule, will add what is behind, and, in his own time, graft Grace upon Nature.

But do we (as every one, I trust, doth, who hears me this day) profess ourselves to be the Disciples of Christ? And, can we think ourselves really to Be, what we profess, while we openly and avowed-  
ly

ly break this great Precept of Christ; the SER M.  
main Hinge, upon which the Morality IX.  
of his Gospel turns? We may boast, if  
we please, of our having all Knowledge,  
and all Faith, and of our Understanding  
all Mysteries: But if we do not govern  
our Lives by this Truth, which is evi-  
dent by Nature, 'twill be to no purpose,  
that we firmly assent to those Truths  
which are reveal'd to us by Grace. We  
deny Christianity, indeed, if we reject  
These: But if we live in Contradiction  
to That, we renounce the Principles of  
Human Nature itself; without supposing  
which, there can be no Christianity. Let  
us Profess, and Believe what we will;  
unless We Do also as We would be done  
unto, all Our Faith, and Our Religion  
is vain. Nor is it Vain only, and Un-  
profitable, in respect of our Selves; it is  
also of pernicious Consequence to Others,  
who, from such Instances as these, will  
take occasion to disparage the Influence  
and Efficacy of Reveal'd Religion, and  
to harden themselves in their Infidelity.  
The Ridiculers of Divine Faith, the De-  
spisers

SERMON. Spisers of Mysteries, never exercise their

IX.



Scornful Talent with greater Pleasure, or Success, than when they attack the Principles of Christianity, by comparing them with the Practice of Christians; especially in this Capital Article of all Schemes of Religion, *the doing to Men as we would be done unto*; and can point out our manifest and scandalous Violations of this plain Rule of Reason, while we pretend to embrace all the Sublime Doctrines, and to inherit all the glorious Advantages of a Divine Revelation. The Heathen

Mat. xii.  
41.

Emperor, *Severus*, shall rise up in the Judgment with such a Generation of Christians, and condemn them: For, He, by the Light of Nature, was taught highly to reverence this Precept; it was written on the Walls of his Palace, and in the Banners of his Army; it was engrav'd in his very Heart, and transcrib'd from thence into his Practice. Would to God, that many of those pretended Vicars of Christ, who have since erected their Thrones in the Chief Seat of this Prince's Empire, had alike succeeded him in an  
Awful



Awful and Conscientious Regard for this S E R M.  
Excellent Maxim, and had been, in that IX.  
respect, as good Christians, (or rather,   
as good Heathens) as He was! They would  
nor, then, have become the Authors and  
Fomenters of all that Discord and Con-  
fusion, all those Wars and Massacres,  
those Conspiracies and Rebellions, with  
which they have, for many Centuries  
past, shook the Thrones of Princes, and  
disturb'd the Quiet of this Western  
World. Nor would they, in order to  
cover and palliate these Wicked Attempts,  
have openly encourag'd the Casuists of  
their Communion to publish such loose  
and scandalous Systems of Morals, as, in-  
stead of being Comments on this Rule,  
are a perfect Contradiction to it, and are  
calculated, not to bring up Mens Obedi-  
ence to the Terms of the Gospel, but to  
bring down the Gospel-Terms, as near as  
can be, to the Infirmities and Failings,  
nay, to the Corruptions and Vices of Hu-  
man Nature.

The Time would fail me, should I at-  
tempt to mention the most remarkable

In-

SERM. Instances, which would readily offer them-

IX. selves, in either kind: That One Instance, which the Treason of This Day affords us, doth, in effect, comprehend the Wickedness of all the rest; and is, when briefly insisted on, sufficient to raise in us a due Abhorrence of those Ungodly Principles and Practices, by which the Papacy hath enlarg'd its Interests, and establish'd its Spiritual Tyranny over the Understandings and Consciences of Men.

The Treason of This Day was a Contrivance, Wicked and Cruel beyond Example, and beyond Expression; Such, as the Ears of any Honest Heathen when they hear it related, must tingle at; Such as, if perpetrated in the Infancy of Christianity, would have gone near to have arrested the Course of it, in Countries as yet unconverted, and to have render'd even the Miracles, done for its Confirmation, insignificant and vain: In a word, Such, as nothing but the Malice of One of that Order, which hath been, ever since its first Erection, the Scourge and Pest of Mankind, could have pro-

projected; nor Any, but some of its Bi-  
gotted and Furious Votaries, durst to  
have Executed. Blessed *Jesu*! That ever  
Men more particularly calling themselves  
by Thy Name, and pretending more im-  
mediately to devote themselves to Thy  
Service, should so far forget the Law of  
Humanity and Kindness, which was vi-  
sible in every Part of thy Behaviour,  
while thou wast on Earth, and is still le-  
gible in every Page of thy Gospel! That  
they should be misled, by the perverse  
Comments of their Own Casuists upon  
this Law, so far, as to believe, that a  
Massacring Spirit was reconcilable to the  
Spirit of Christianity, and that the ge-  
nuin Principles of it could lead, or per-  
mit Men to overturn States and King-  
doms! Such Ill Effects may spring from  
the best of Causes, Religion, when per-  
verted and abus'd! Such Horrid Impie-  
ties may Men arrive at, when they have  
once fix'd this Persuasion firmly in them-  
selves, That, how vile soever the At-  
tempts are, in which they engage, yet, if  
the End be good, it justifies and sanctifies

SERM.

IX.



5



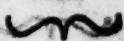
SERM. the Means; and that the plainest Rules  
 IX. and Duties of the Gospel do not bind  
 Those who are, as they imagin, propa-  
 gating the Interests of it.

Blessed be thy Name, O Lord, who  
 didst, as on this Day, after a marvellous  
 manner, disappoint their Bloody De-  
 signs, when they were even ready to  
 take place, and didst suffer our Princes,  
 our Prelates, our Nobles, all the Chief  
 Ornaments and Supports of thy pure  
 undefil'd Religion Establish'd among us,

Pf. cxxiv. *to escape out of their Hands, even as a*  
 7. *Bird from the Snare of the Fowler!*

lxxvi. 10. *Surely the Wrath of Man hath prais'd,*  
*and shall praise thee: — The Remainder*  
*of Wrath shalt thou restrain.*

I need not endeavour to raise your  
 Thankfulness for the Mercies of this Day,  
 by shewing, that, as distant as they are,  
 they still belong to us. Some Blessings  
 wax not old, or decay; but, like the  
 Rod of the Tribe of *Levi*, laid up in  
 the Tabernacle, though seemingly sapless  
 and dead, do yet shoot, and send forth  
 their Blossoms. And such is That we

now Commemorate; even Now we taste SERM.  
 the sweet Fruits and Effects of it: For to IX.  
 this Day's Deliverance (this Day's Double   
 Deliverance) it is owing, that we are  
 freed from the Fears of Papal Superstiti-  
 on and Bondage; that we enjoy all our  
 Religious, and Civil Liberties, all that  
 is dear and valuable to us, in respect of  
 This World, or Another; and even that  
 we see HER on the Throne (the Throne  
 of her Royal Ancestors, design'd this  
 Day for Slaughter) Who, by sitting there,  
 protects and secures us in these Enjoy-  
 ments.

Great and manifold have the Instances  
 been of God's Interposition to rescue  
 this Church and Nation, when they most  
 needed it; nor is his *Hand yet shortned*, Isa. lix. 1.  
*that it cannot save:* For, behold, what  
 mighty things he hath lately wrought for  
 us! In how seasonable and surprizing a  
 manner he hath bless'd the Arms, which  
 have been taken up in Defence of his  
 True Religion, the Liberties of *Europe*,  
 and the Rights of Mankind, against the  
 Common Invader and Destroyer of all  
of

SERM. of them! Whose haughty Heart he hath

IX. at last humbled, and stain'd his boasted

*W* Glory; the Vain Idol, which that proud

Monarch set up, and commanded all Na-

tions to fall down and worship! The

Success, which God hath given us, is

great in itself; but much greater in the

Consequences which it seems to promise.

For who knows but that, by this single

Blow, the Fate of that Kingdom may at

length be decided? of that Insolent King-

Nu. xxiv. dom, who thought she had put her Nest

21. in the Rock, whither none could approach

to hurt her? And seem'd (in the Expressi-

Isa. xlvii. ons of the Prophet) to say in her Heart,

7, 8. I shall be a Lady for ever; I am, and

none else beside me? Who knows, but

that the mighty Hunter of Men may,

from this Moment, be oblig'd to fore-

go his Chace? May find it come to his

turn, to fly, and be pursued every where?

and have the Preys, which he hath vio-

lently seiz'd, ravish'd again out of his

Hands! Who knows, but that the several

Victories which he hath meanly Stol'n,

or Purchas'd, may now, after a more

fair



fair and generous manner, be regain'd? SERM.  
and all the Laurels, he unjustly wears, IX.  
be torn from his Temples, and plac'd on  
the Head of *Another*, who better deserves  
them? Certain it is, that God hath al-  
ready begun to do these great Things for  
us; which, unless we are wanting to our  
selves, 'he will as certainly finish. Al-  
ready, since this Blow was given, we  
have seen the happy Effects of it, in the  
Publick Confession of an Exhausted Ex-  
chequer, and a Languishing Credit: E-  
vils, which, God be thanked, are nei-  
ther felt, nor fear'd by us at home, un-  
der the present Vigilant and Wise Admi-  
nistration.

Do Thou, O God, we beseech Thee;  
go on to *strengthen the Thing which*  
*thou hast wrought for us! Shew thy*  
*Servants thy Work, and their Children*  
*thy Glory! And the Glorious Majesty of* Psal. lxxvii.  
*the Lord our God be upon us! Prosper* 28.  
*thou the Work of our Hands upon us! O,* xc. 16, 17.  
*prosper thou our Handy-work.*

and generous manner, he regain'd his  
and all the laurels he unjustly wears,  
the torn from his Temples, and plac'd on  
the Head of Ahab, who better deserves  
them? Certain it is, that God hath al-  
ready begun to do these great Things for  
us; which, unless we are wanting to our-  
selves, he will as certainly finish. Al-  
ready, since this Blow was given, we  
have seen the happy Effects of it, in the  
Publick Confession of an Exchanged Ex-  
chequer, and a Languishing Credit: Bi-  
vils, which, God be thanked, are not  
ther felt, nor fear'd by us at home, un-  
der the present Vigilant and Wise Admin-  
istration.

To Thee, O God, we beseech Thee,  
go on to strengthen the Thing which  
thou hast wrought for us! Show thy  
Servants thy Work, and their Children  
thy Glory! And the Glorious Majesty of  
the Lord our God be upon us! Preserve  
thou the Work of our Hands upon us, O  
preserve them our Handy-work.

*Of Religious Retirement.*

**S E R M O N**

**Preach'd before the**

**Q U E E N**

**At**

**St. James's CHAPEL,**

**On Friday, March 23. 1704-5.**

**MATTH. xiv. 23.**

*When he had sent the Multitude away,  
he went up into a Mountain, apart,  
to Pray.*

**I**T hath been disputed, which is a **S E R M.**  
**S**tate of greater Perfection, the **S O C I A L** **X.**  
or the Solitary; whereas, in truth,  
neither of these Estates is complear with-



SERM. out the Other, as the Example of our

x. Blessed Lord (the Unerring Test and

Measure of Perfection) informs us. His Life, (which ought to be the Pattern of Ours) was a Mixture of Contemplation and Action, of Austerity and Freedom: We find him often, where the greatest Concourse was, in the Market-Places, in the Synagogues, and at Festival Entertainments; and we find him also retiring from the Crowd into a Desert, or a Garden, and there employing himself in all kinds of Religious Exercise, and Intercourse with God, in Fasting, Meditation, and Prayer. In Imitation of His Spotless Example, we *may*, doubtless, lead Publick Lives, Innocently, and Usefully; Conversing with Men, and doing good to them; mutually sowing, and reaping the several Comforts and Advantages of Human Society. But because the Pleasures of Conversation, when too freely tasted, are Intoxicating, and Dangerous; because the Temptations we there meet with are many and mighty, and even where the *Spirit is Willing* to resist,

resist, yet the *Flesh* is often *Weak*; we SERM.  
ought, therefore, to lessen the too great X.  
Complacence we are apt to have in  
such Satisfactions, by fit Intermiſſions of  
them; to strengthen our selves for such  
Publick Encounters, by our Religious  
Privacies; to retire from the World  
ſometimes, and Converſe with God, and  
our own Conſciences; examining the  
State, and fortifying the Powers of our  
Souls, in Secrecy and Silence? We muſt  
do, as our Lord did, *Send the Multitudes  
away, and go up into the Mountain, a-  
part, to Pray.*

I ſhall, from theſe Words, take Occa-  
ſion to diſcourſe to you concerning the  
Great (but much Neglected) Duty of *Re-  
ligious Retreat* and *Recollection*. I ſhall,  
firſt, briefly ſhew you, under what Limi-  
tations I would be underſtood to recom-  
mend the Duty; and, then, What the  
Advantages are, which ariſe from a de-  
vout and diſcreet Performance of it.

I mean not to preſs upon you that  
ſort of Retirement, which is ſo much  
eſteem'd and practis'd in the Church of

SERM. *Rome*; where all Perfection is reckon'd

x. to consist in Solitude, and no Man is  
 allow'd capable of arriving at the height  
 of Virtue, who doth not strip himself  
 of all the Conveniencies of Life, and  
 renounce all manner of Acquaintance  
 with the World, and the Things of it:  
 I see not, wherein this State of Life  
 claims the Preeminence over all others;  
 how it is founded in Nature, and Reason;  
 what particular Example, Precept, or  
 Direction there is in the Gospel, inviting  
 us to it. *John* the Baptist is, indeed, there  
 represented, as sequestering himself from  
 Human Converse, and spending his time

Luke i. 17. *in the Wilderness*: but as he is said to  
 ix. 55. have come *in the Spirit and Power of*  
*Elias*, (a Spirit far different from the  
*Spirit* of the Gospel) and did, therefore,  
 professedly imitate that Prophet, in his  
 severe manner of Life, and Look, and  
 Diet, and Garb, and Behaviour, and  
 Doctrine; so his Example belong'd ra-  
 ther to the *Mosaick State*, under which  
 he liv'd and taught, than to the *Christian*  
*Dispensation*, which began, where his  
 Preach-



Preaching ended. Nor did even the SERM.  
Baptist himself propose his own Practice, X.  
as a Pattern to his Followers: on the  
contrary, when *the People, the Publicans,*  
and *the Soldiers* enquir'd of him, *what*  
*they should do, to flee from the Wrath to*  
*come,* he did not exhort them to go out  
of the World into the Wilderness; but  
gave them such Directions only as related  
to a faithful Discharge of their Duty in  
their several Stations and Callings: And  
when afterwards our Saviour began to  
enter on his Ministry, and to appear  
as our Saviour, by publishing the Gospel  
of his Kingdom, we find nothing either  
in his Actions, or his Doctrine, to coun-  
tenance that Recluse and Solitary State,  
which some since, who would be thought  
best to have imitated his Example, and  
obey'd his Precepts, have so zealously  
espous'd and practis'd. His Divine Dis-  
courses were chiefly spent in pressing  
Men to exercise those Graces which a-  
dorn the Sociable State: even his first  
Sermon on the Mount to the Multitude  
did, in the Entrance of it, recommend

S E R M. and enjoin a Publick, Conspicuous, and  
 X. Exemplary Virtue; and (with some Allu-  
 sion, perhaps, to that Eminence on  
 which he sat, and the Company which  
 surrounded him) he then liken'd his Di-  
 sciples to a City set on an Hill, that  
 cannot be hid; he commanded them to  
 Mat. v. 14. put their Light in a Candlestick, not un-  
 der a Bushel; and so to make it shine  
 Ib. v. 15. before Men, that They seeing their good  
 Works, might glorify their Father which  
 is in Heaven.

Far be it from me, however, to con-  
 demn all those Good and Holy Persons;  
 who have betaken themselves to this So-  
 litary and Austere Course of Living.  
 Doubtless, many of them were acted by  
 a sincere, but misguided, Principle of  
 Piety, the Fruits of which, tho' mix'd  
 with a great Allay of Superstition, did  
 yet, in divers respects, redound to the  
 Credit of Religion, and the Good of Man-  
 kind. But supposing these to be Real,  
 yet they were, I say, Uncommanded  
 Instances of Virtue; not possible; or, if  
 possible, not fit to be practis'd by the  
 far

far greater Part of Christians. The Re-<sup>SE R M</sup> treat, therefore, which I am speaking of, <sup>X.</sup> is not that of *Monks* and *Hermits*, but of Men living in the World, and going out of it for a time, in order to return into it; it is a Temporary, not a Total Retreat; such as we may leave off, or resume, at Pleasure, according as we have Need of it, or an Opportunity for it; such, as is consistent with all the Business, and even with the Innocent Pleasures of Life; and is so far from interfering with the Duties of our Publick Offices and Stations, that it disposes and enables us for the better Discharge of them. 'Tis this Sort of Retreat which may properly be made the matter of general Exhortation from the Pulpit, because it is really matter of general Obligation to every good and sincere Christian.

No Man is, or ought to be so deeply immers'd in the Affairs of this World, as not to be able to retire from them now and then into his Closet, there to mind the Concerns of Another. Every  
Day



SERM. Day of his Life, Early, or Late, some

X.



Moments he may and must find to bestow this Way ; the Lord's Day particularly is a great Opportunity of this kind, which can never wholly be neglected without Indevotion, or even without Scandal. And such also is the Annual Season of Recollection in which we are now far advanc'd ; not, I trust, without having employ'd it, in some measure, to those good Purposes for which it was intended. At such Times as these, either when the Labours and Ordinary Occupations of Life cease, or when Publick Diversions and Entertainments are forbidden ; Then every One, the Noble and the Mean, the Wealthy and the Poor, hath it certainly in his Power, if it be but in his Heart, to retire : to step aside from the Hurry and Vanities of Life, and all the Allurements of Sense, and to Examine, and Improve, and Enjoy himself in private.

That we may be all excited so to do, I shall proceed, in the next Place, to represent to You the several Advantages attending

attending this Religious Practice; whether we consider it, as a Means of effacing the Ill Impressions made on our Minds in Daily Conversation, or as an Opportunity of pursuing farther Degrees of Perfection, and abounding in all the Methods of Spiritual Improvement.

The Advantages of the first kind, which it affords us, are plainly such as These; That it unites and fixes our scatter'd Thoughts; places us out of the Reach of the most Dangerous Temptations; frees us from the Insinuating Contagion of Ill Examples, and hushes and lays asleep those troublesome Passions, which are the great Disturbers of our Repose and Happiness.

A Dissipation of Thought is the Natural and Unavoidable Effect of our Conversing much in the World; where we cannot help squandering away a great deal of Our Time upon Useless Objects, of no true Worth in themselves, and of no real Concern to us. We roul on in a Circle of vain empty Pleasures, and are deliver'd over continually from one slight Amusement

SERMON. ment to another; ever seemingly very  
 x. Busy, and ever really very Idle; apply-  
 ~~~~~ ing our selves without Respite to That,  
 which it becomes us most to neglect, and
 utterly neglectful of that One thing Ne-
 cessary, which it becomes and behoves
 us most to pursue. This give us by de-
 grees such a Levity and Wantonness of
 Spirit, as refuses Admittance to all se-
 rious Thoughts, and renders us incapa-
 ble of Reflection: makes our Closet a
 Terrible place to us, and Solitude a Bur-
 then. To retrieve our selves from this
 vain, uncertain, roving, distracted way
 of thinking and living, it is requisite to
 retire frequently, and to Converse much
 with (what We above all things Love,
 and yet above all things hate to converse
 with) Our Selves; to inure our Minds
 to Recollection, to fix them on the great-
 est and most concerning Objects, those
 which Religion suggests, and which will,
 by their Importance, deserve, and en-
 gage, and command our Attention; till
 the busy Swarm of vain Images, that
 besets us, be thoroughly dispers'd, and
 the

the several Scatter'd Rays of Thought, SERM.
by being thus collected together, do by X.
little and little warm our Frozen Hearts, 
and at last produce an Holy Flame.

The Expedience of Retirement is yet
greater, as it removes us out of the way
of the most pressing and powerful Temp-
tations that are incident to Human Na-
ture. Ye all know by Experience, that
These meet us most frequently, and af-
fect us most strongly in Society; where
our Senses, the great Inlets of Tempta-
tion, are most awaken'd, and tempting
Objects, by their Number and Nearness,
make the most Vivid and Lasting Impres-
sions upon us. * Indeed, there is no Place,
no State, or Scene of Life, that hath not
its proper and peculiar Temptations;
even Solitude it self is not without them:
but they are few, and faint, in compari-
son with those to which our Appearance

* Ο δὲ τῆς ἐρημίας εὐχρον, πρὶν τὸν μὲν ἔχει τὴν ἀνάγκην ἡ-
δύσθαι αὐτῷ ἢ λογισμῶς ἀποπ. ἐπινοοῦναι τι ταῦτον, ἀλλ'
αἰδοῦναι ἢ φαντασίᾳ ἢ τυχῶς ἐκδοῦναι ὑπομνήν, διὰ τὸ μὴ
προσκησάσθαι τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς θεωρίας ὕλην τῆς φλογός.

21 *Epist. ad Irenaeum*. p. 230. Edit. per Hughes facta.

SERM. on the great Stage of the World exposes
 us; and whenever they attack us in our
 Recesses, they do, or may find us pre-
 par'd, and upon our guard; we are then
 at leisure to encounter them, and have
 Helps near at hand, which, if made use
 of, will enable us to decline, or baffle
 them. Whereas, in Publick, we are
 merely Passive to such Impressions;
 which strike our Minds so violently; and
 succeed each other so fast, that we have
 no Opportunity, no Strength, no Inclination almost to withstand them.

The great Risque which Virtue runs
 in Company, is, from the Neighbour-
 hood of Ill Examples, which are of so
 Contagious a Nature, that, if we live
 much amongst them, we shall as surely
 be corrupted by them, as he, that often
 breathes in Ill Air, will at last partake of
 the Infection. 'Tis dangerous for the
 most Innocent Person in the World to be
 too frequently and nearly a Witness to
 the Commission of Vice and Folly. Such
 Views lessen the Natural Horror we have
 for such Actions; and render the Thoughts
 of

of them more Familiar, and less Displeasing to us. Especially, when we are us'd to see Ill Things practis'd by Persons, whom we regard; the favourable Opinion we have of the Doer extends it self to the Action done; and leads us insensibly from seeing to approving, and from approving to imitating. And thus being (the very best of us) prone to do Evil, and Living in the midst of Evil; being attack'd thus from without, and betray'd from within; we are not capable of making an effectual Resistance: The only Refuge, we have, is in Retreat, where we may at leisure correct the Ill Impressions that have been made upon us; and, by Disuse, and Distance, weaken the Force of those Ill Influences which we could not wholly avoid.

Another Advantage which Retirement affords us, is, that it calms and composes all the Passions; those especially of the tumultuous kind; which, while the Business and Pleasures of Life possess our Hearts, are under a Restless and Violent Agitation. We seldom mix long in Conversation,

SERM. version, without meeting with some
 X. Accident that ruffles and disturbs us;
 ~~~~~ somewhat that plays either upon our  
 Hopes, or our Fears; our Aversions, or  
 Desires. An Injurious, or Slighting Word  
 is thrown out, which we think our selves  
 oblig'd to resent; or some Innocent Ex-  
 pression of ours is misinterpreted and re-  
 sented by Others, and That provokes a  
 Return. Our Enemy comes in our way,  
 and kindles Thoughts of Aversion and  
 Hatred in us; we look upon those, who  
 are above us in all the Advantages of  
 Life, with Envious Eyes, and with Con-  
 tempt on those who are beneath us. Thus  
 are we deliver'd over from Passion to  
 Passion, toss'd and disquieted in our  
 Minds, during the Intercourse we main-  
 tain with the World. But when we quit  
 it, and retire, all these Winds are pre-  
 sently laid, and there is a Perfect Calm.  
 The Objects, which excite us, being re-  
 moved, our Appetites also Languish and  
 Die away; we possess our Souls in Pa-  
 tience and Peace, and enjoy a profound  
 Tranquillity and Rest, the Pleasure of  
 which

which is great to those who are so happy S E R M.  
as to have a Relish for it; and is inhiand X.  
by being always tasted with Innocence. 

Wouldst thou then be free from Envy and Scorn, from Anger and Strife? fly from the Occasions of them; steal away from the great Scene of Passion and Business into thy Privacy, shut the Doors about thee, *Commune with thy* Pc. iv. 4.  
*Own Heart in thy Chamber, and be still.* There all Animosities are forgotten, all Pursuits, all Competitions cease; there all Marks of Distinction are laid aside; the Great and the Lowly, the Prince and the Subject are upon the Level; equally under the Eye of one Common Master, equally desirous of pleasing Him, and mindless of lesser Interests and Concerns. There the Vanities and Vexations of this World are shut out, and the Considerations of another are let in; and our Soul enjoys that sweet Contentment and Repose, which it enjoys no where else, on this side Heaven.

I have hitherto consider'd the Usefulness of Religious Retreat, with respect  
VOL. I. A a 10

SERM. to some Ill Impressions made upon us in  
 X. Conversation, which it removes. I shall  
 now consider it, as productive of the Chief  
 Christian Graces and Virtues; in as much  
 as it affords us the best Opportunity of  
 knowing God, and our Selves, and of  
 taking all the proper Methods to recon-  
 cile and approve ourselves to God; which  
 are Consequent upon such a Knowledge.  
 For, tho' it be expedient for Every Rank  
 and Order of Men, yet is it more particu-  
 larly, advantageous to Penitents, to go up  
 with our Saviour *into the Mountain, a-  
 part, to Pray.*

Job xxii.  
 21.

'Tis our Duty, and our Privilege, our  
 Chief Honour and Happiness, to be ac-  
 quainted with God; and this Acquaintance  
 can never be made, but, where we di-  
 vest ourselves of all Other Acquaintance,  
 in our Closets. When we have call'd off  
 our Thoughts from Worldly Pursuits and  
 Engagements, then (and not till then)  
 are we at Liberty to fix them on the best,  
 the most deserving, and desirable of Ob-  
 jects, God; to study his Blessed Nature  
 and Perfections, to imprint a filial Awe



of him on our Hearts, a lively Sense of SERM.  
his perpetual Inspection and Presence, X.  
to abound in all the Methods of Devout  
Application to him, in Acts of Petition  
and Praise, of Joy and Wonder, of Sub-  
mission and Hope, of Love and Affiance;  
to open all our Wants, and impart all our  
Griefs to him, and to express in the most  
significant manner we are able, our En-  
tire and Unlimited Dependance upon  
him; till, by often dwelling on such  
Thoughts and Reflections as these, we  
have made them Familiar, Habitual, and  
Natural to us; and can have as Easy and  
Delightful a Recourse to God, in all Ac-  
cidents, and upon all Occasions, as a Son  
hath to a Belov'd and Loving Parent,  
who, he knows, is at all Times able to  
assist, and ready to receive him: In a  
Word, till we can look up to God in  
Each Step of our Conduct, as the Su-  
preme End and Guide of all our Actions,  
the fix'd Centre of all our Wishes, De-  
sires, and Designs; till we bring our  
selves to Love Nothing in Competition  
with him, nothing but in order to the

SERM. Enjoyment of him; and resolve to Do  
 X. nothing, and Be nothing, but what we  
 are sure will please him.

Can any thing refine, raise, or ennobble our Natures more than such a Conversation as This, which is thus begun, improv'd, and perfected in Solitude? Shall we not think it worth our while, to cease for a time from cultivating Useless and Perishing Friendships with Men, that we may be the more at Leisure, and the better qualify'd, to enter into this Divine Correspondence, which is of the yastest Concern to us, and upon which our Everlasting Welfare depends?

While indeed our Hearts are deeply engag'd in the Concerns of this World, we cannot well relish the Pleasures of such a Spiritual Commerce: But, after we have once accusom'd and inur'd our selves to it, we shall find it the most delightful Entertainment of the Mind of Man, pleasing as Light to the Eyes, *sweeter than Honey and the Honey-Comb.* Sensual Men may make sport with such a Pretence, and call it Enthusiasm, and  
 the

the Product of an Heated Imagination; SERM.  
 but They, that taste the Satisfaction, X.  
 know it to be real, and would not part  
 with it for all the Delights this World  
 can afford; and which (in the dispa-  
 rating Phrase of the Apostle) they *count* Phil. iii. 8.  
*but as dung*, in comparision of *the Ex-*  
*cellency of this Knowledge of God, and*  
*Christ Jesus.*

As Religious Retirement is a great  
 Means of advancing us in the Knowledge  
 of God, so doth it assist us towards at-  
 taining a True Knowledge of Ourselves;  
 towards searching and trying all our  
 ways, and getting a right Information  
 concerning the State of our Consciences.  
 He that will thrive in his Temporal Af-  
 fairs, must often balance his Accounts,  
 examine his Gains, and his Losses, and  
 see what Proportion they bear to each  
 other; consider, where his Conduct may  
 have been faulty in any respect, and how  
 for the future to rectify it. The same  
 Vigilance and Care is requisite in relation  
 to our Spiritual Concerns also; and  
 we can never exert it effectually but in



SER.M. the Closet, where Privacy and Silence  
 X. befriend our Enquiries. When the Im-  
 portunity of Outward Objects ceases,  
 when the Noise and Avocations of a  
 troublesome World are at a Distance, we  
 may enter upon these Searches without  
 Difficulty, and finish them without Inter-  
 ruption. We may then look inwards,  
 and take a Distinct View of what at  
 Other times passes there unobserv'd; of  
 our hidden Inclinations and Aversions,  
 of the Springs which secretly move us  
 in all our Pursuits, of the Temptations  
 that beset us hardest, and most frequent-  
 ly foil us, of the Ground that we have  
 lost, or got, in our several Encounters.  
 And when we are advanc'd thus far in the  
 Knowledge of ourselves, and of our Ru-  
 ling Sins and Infirmities, we have taken  
 the most useful and necessary Step towards  
 abounding in the Three great Duties of  
 the Penitent, *Contrition, Resolution, and*  
*Prayer.*

*Contrition* is an holy Grief, excited by  
 a lively Sense, not only of the Punish-  
 ment due to our Guilt, (That the Schools  
 call

call *Attrition*) but likewise of the Infi-SERM.  
 nite Goodness of God, against which we X.  
 have offended; accompany'd with a De-  
 testation of our Sin, and of ourselves,  
 for the sake of it. At this Act of the  
 Mind Repentance (properly speaking)  
 begins; and this Godly Concern of Heart  
 is rarely attain'd, to be sure, it can ne-  
 ver be duly exerted, and improv'd, but  
 in private. And, therefore, in the Sto-  
 ry of St. Paul we may observe that,  
 as soon as a Conviction of his Guilt  
 had seiz'd him, it is said, that *he went* Mat. xxvi.  
*out, and wept bitterly*; he withdrew into <sup>75</sup>  
 a Secret Place, where he might mourn  
 his own Fall with freedom; where he  
 might feed, and raise up to a due height  
 the Inward Anguish he felt, and indulge  
 himself in all the Expressions of sincere  
 Sorrow. The Wounds of Conscience,  
 like other Wounds, though generally re-  
 ceiv'd in publick, must always be heal'd  
 in Private: There they may be laid open  
 and search'd to the bottom, there the  
 raging Smart of them is best endur'd,  
 and there suitable Remedies are most  
 easily

SER. M. easily, and most usefully apply'd; where  
 X. Leisure, and Rest, Silence, and a Proper  
 Discipline assist the Patient, and promote  
 the Cure.

The next Step to Contrition is, *Resolution*, or a firm immutable Purpose of Heart, never more to allow ourselves in that Transgression, which we now abominate, and deplore. And, in order to the forming such a well-weigh'd and stable Resolution, there must be a calm and clear foresight of the Difficulties which may attend the Execution of it, and a just Computation of our Own Strength to bear up against them; we must deliberately consider, under what Circumstances the Temptation, against which we are now arming ourselves, hath beset us hardest, and how, for the future, we may best decline them; what Helps and supports we have by Experience found most useful, and how, in the Day of Trial, we may be secure of them; to what a broken-dispirited State of Mind we have already reduc'd ourselves, by so often and lightly departing from what

we



we had purpos'd; and, with how much S E R M.  
 greater Difficulty, every time that we X.  
 give way, we recover our Ground. I  
 need not prove to you, that these, and  
 the like Reflections, which are necessary  
 towards our Resolving well and wisely,  
 can never be dwelt on, in all their due  
 Compass and Force, but at Leisure, and  
 in sacred Retirement. Doubtless, the  
 good Psalmist had been some time in  
 his Closet, and on his Knees, when he  
 utter'd those Emphatical Words; *I have*  
*sworn, and am steadfastly purposed, to keep*  
*thy Righteous Judgments.* Psal. cxix.  
100.

But of all the Duties of the Penitent,  
 that which Privacy best Qualifies us for,  
 is \* *Prayer*; which it enables us to per-  
 form in such a Manner, as is likely to  
 be most prevalent and effectual. Great  
 indeed is the Excellence and Advantage

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\* Τὸς ἑαυτοῦ εἰς τὸ ὄρεσθαι, παιδεύει ἡμᾶς ὅτι κα-  
 λὸν ἔστιν ἡμεῖς ἐν μόνησι, ὅταν ἐνλογώμεθα δὴ τῷ Θεῷ. Διὰ  
 ταῦτο συνεχῶς εἰς τὰς ἡμέρας ἄπαισι, καὶ διακινητοῖσι παλ-  
 λάκις ἐνχορδοῦμεν, παιδεύει ἡμᾶς καὶ τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ καὶ τὴν  
 ἀπὸ τοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ταῖς ἐνχαῖς ἀταραξίαν, ἡσυχίαν γὰρ  
 μᾶλλον ἢ ἥμενοι, καὶ γαλήνην, καὶ λιμὴν, ἀπάντων ἀπαλλάττου-  
 σα δοῦναι ἡμᾶς. Chrysost. ad Mat. xiv. 23.

SEEM of Public Devotions, as they testify our  
 Common Reverence of the Divine Be-  
 ing, as they are best fitted to implore, or  
 to acknowledge Public Blessings, and as  
 they excite a Public Emulation in the  
 Breasts of Sincere Worshippers. How-  
 ever, in some Respects, they must yield  
 the Preheminence to Closet Prayer, par-  
 ticularly in This, That they are not so  
 well calculated, as That, to procure Ease  
 and Repose of Conscience to the Sin-  
 ner, and to adjust particular Accounts  
 between God and our Souls. For it is  
 of special Use to this purpose, in these  
 Three Respects; as it affords us the best  
 Opportunity of being *Fixed, Fervent,*  
 and *Circumstantial* in our Addresses to  
 God.

In the Solemn Service of the Sanctu-  
 ary, let us endeavour never so much to  
 prevent *Distractions*, we shall now and  
 then be sensible of them; Outward Ob-  
 jects will break in upon our Senses, and  
 divert the Application of our Minds;  
 even the Length of the Office, and the  
 Daily Return of the same Forms, will,

to

to Persons not rightly Qualify'd and Dispos'd, occasion Spiritual Languors and Wandrings. And this is not the Case only of Stated Forms; the same Inconvenience doth, in a much higher degree, belong to Unpremeditated Prayer; the Hearers of which must first judge of the Fitness, both of the Matter and the Expression, before they can reasonably join in what they hear. And thus the Novelty of the Phrase, instead of fixing, breaks and divides the Attention of a sincere Worshiper; his Curiosity indeed may be awaken'd by this means, but his Devotion is certainly check'd and suspended. Now these Obstacles are all remov'd, these Inconveniences are prevented, when we pray in Private. We are then plac'd immediately under the Eye of God, which awes us; but under no Other Eyes, and in the Neighbourhood of no other Objects, which might divert or discompose us: We are at Liberty to employ that Part of our Time in the Performance of this Service, when we find ourselves best dispos'd for it;

to



s E R M O To make Choice of our own Thoughts,  
 and our own Words; such, as are best  
 suited to our present Necessities, and De-  
 sires: And what is thus passing within  
 ourselves, we cannot but perceive, and  
 attend to. We may break off from the  
 Duty, whenever we find our Attention  
 flags; and return to it at a more season-  
 able Opportunity.

Nor are we capable, at such times, of  
 being more *Fix'd* only, but likewise  
 more *Fervent* and Inflam'd. True Reli-  
 gion is ever modest and Reserv'd in its  
 Demeanor, when it appears in Publick;  
 jealous of doing any thing that may fa-  
 vour of Vanity and Ostentation; unwill-  
 ing to allow itself in any such Ear-  
 nestness of Speech, or Singularity of Be-  
 haviour, as may call off the Eyes and  
 Ears of Others to observe them: It con-  
 tents itself, for the most part, with a  
 Compos'd and Serious Look, with a Sim-  
 ple and Unaffected Carriage. But when  
 Publick Regards and Restraints are taken  
 off, the Pious Soul may then let itself  
 loose into the highest Fervors of Zeal,  
 into

into the freest Raptures of Thought, and SERM.  
into a suitable Vehemence, and Warmth X.  
of Expression: There is no sort of Ho-  
ly Address, which it is not then allow'd  
to make use of; no outward Signs of  
Devotion and Reverence, which it may  
not decently abound in.

There is yet another great Advantage  
that attends our Private Devotions; They  
give us leave to be as Express and *Parti-*  
*cular* as we please in our Representations.  
In the Church, the Sinner and the Saint,  
Men of all Ranks, Distinctions, and At-  
tainments in Virtue, must join in the  
same Common Forms: And tho' each  
of them may, by a sudden Glance of  
Mind, adapt the General Words to his  
own Circumstances; yet one Branch of  
the Service presses too fast upon another,  
to admit of any Pause between them.  
And They, therefore, who lie under the  
Load of any Particular Guilt, rise not  
from their Knees with so much Com-  
fort, as they would have done, had they  
been at Liberty to dwell upon it, and  
confess it in all its Aggravations. This

Liberty

SERMON. Liberty their Closet, and that alone, can  
 X: afford them. There they may Expatiate  
 as much as they please upon their Wants  
 and Unworthiness: There they may pour  
 out all their Complaints to God, and lay  
 open all their Grievs and Fears, and send  
 up all their Thanks and Acknowledg-  
 ments: There Importunities are not for-  
 bidden, Repetitions are not unbecoming;  
 but they may persist Knocking till it is  
 Open'd to them, and Asking till they  
 have Obtain'd.

These are some of the many Spiritual  
 Advantages, which the present Hours of  
 holy Recollection, when well employ'd,  
 will be sure to afford us. And God  
 grant, that All of us may, as we have  
 Opportunity and Leisure, so employ  
 them!

Indeed, the greater our Sphere of  
 Publick Action is, the less Time we can  
 allow ourselves to spend in these Reli-  
 gious Exercises; but still Some of it is  
 due to them, nor can any Secular Cares,  
 or Avocations whatsoever, wholly excuse  
 us from paying it. Our Blessed Lord,



we are sure, had very great Business to SERM.  
transact with Mankind, and a very short X.  
Time in which to finish it; and yet,   
during his Three Years Conversation on  
Earth, we find him often exchanging  
the Duties of the Active and Publick  
State, for those of the Solitary and Pri-  
vate; *sending the Multitudes away, and  
going up into the Mountain, apart, to  
Pray.* And we are sure, that in This,  
as well as Other Respects, he *left Us an* 2 Pet. ii.  
*Example, that we should follow his* <sup>21.</sup>  
*Steps.*

*To Him, together with the Father and  
the Blessed Spirit, Three Persons,  
and One God, be ascrib'd all Ma-  
jesty, Dominion and Power, now  
and for evermore. Amen.*

F I N I S.

we are now had very great business to transact with shipping, and a very short time in which to finish it; and yet during his Three Year Commission on Earth we find him fully occupying the duties of the Active and Productive for those of the Society and the State, finding the material means, and coming up into the Mountains, about the year. And we are surprised that in this as well as other respects the Union has been so successful.

Steph.

and for evermore. Amen.

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